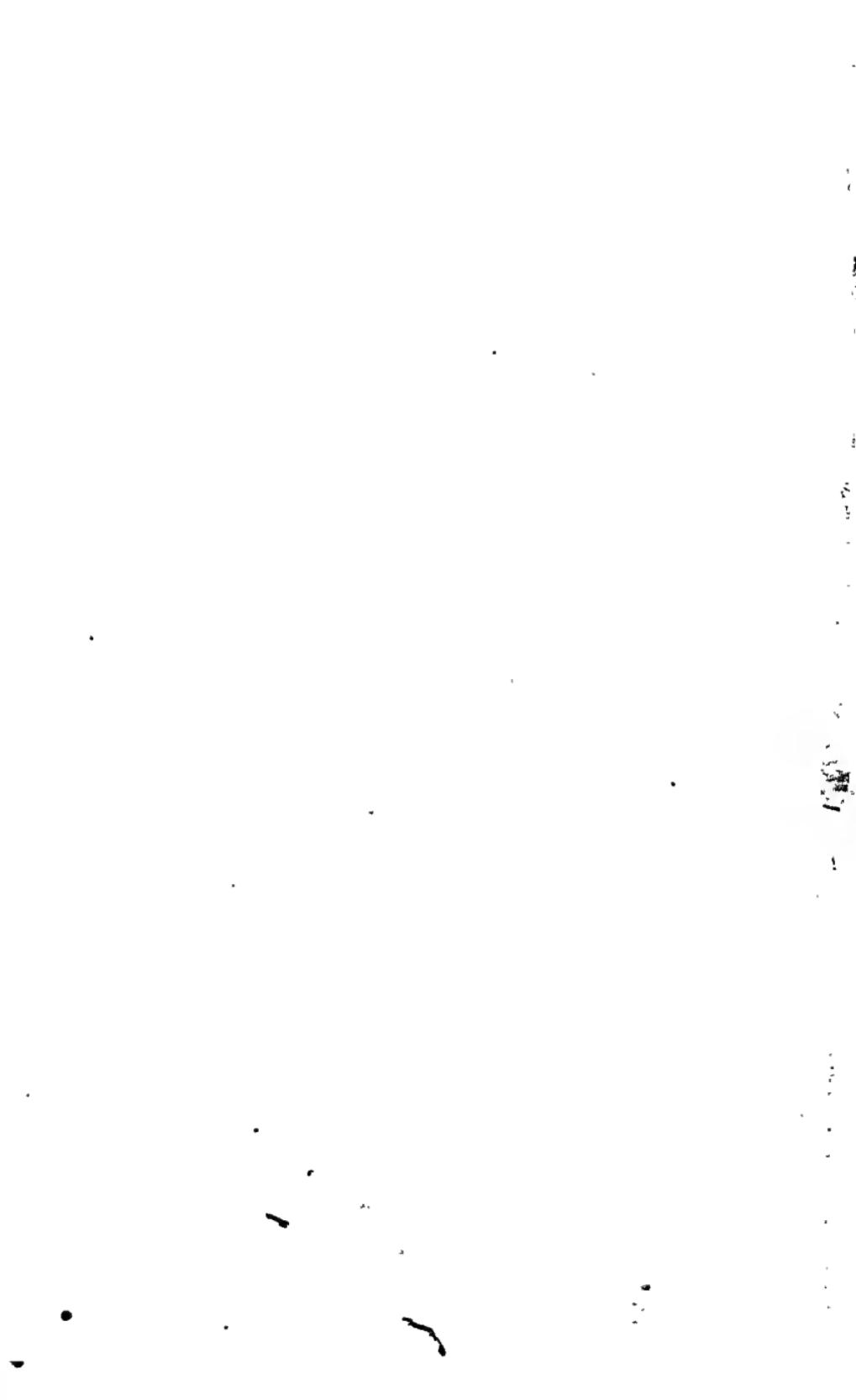


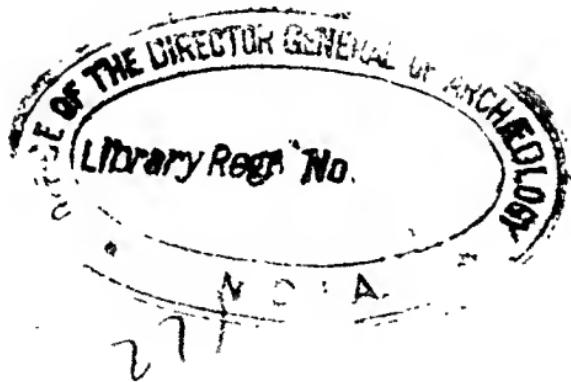
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E. GIBBONASCO

NOT TO BE LOST

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE

ROMAN EMPIRE.

13365

BY EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR:

WRITTEN FOR THIS EDITION.

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EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR BELL AND BRADFUTE, PETER HILL, SILVESTER DOIG
AND A. STIRLING, AND JOHN OGLE.

1811.

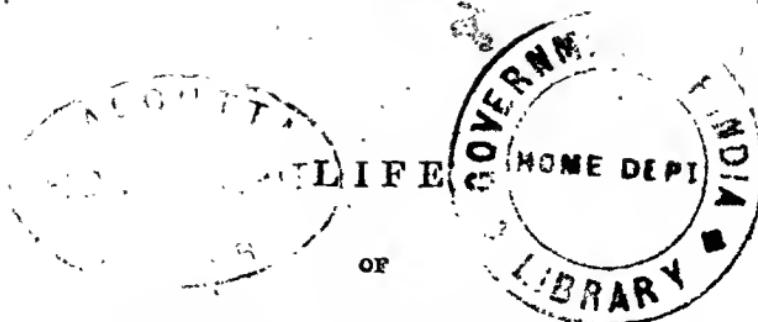
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EDWARD GIBBON, Esq.

THIS great historian was born at Putney, in the county of Surrey, on the 27th April 1737. His paternal ancestors were persons of some distinction. His grandfather, Edward, was first a commissioner of customs, and afterwards a director of the South Sea Company. In this last capacity, he lost the greatest part of his fortune, and no small share of his reputation, though his grandson has endeavoured to justify him from the severe charges brought against that body. He contrived to retrieve his fortune; but, displeased with his son, who was also named Edward, on account of a matrimonial connection, he left him only a small share of the estate. Edward, however, received a liberal education, was twice member of Parliament, and distinguished himself by a persevering opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. He was married to Judith Porten, daughter of a citizen of London, by whom he had six sons and a daughter, all of whom died in their infancy except the subject of the present memoir. His own constitution was so extremely weak, that he was scarcely expected to reach the age of manhood; and his father, that the patronymic name of Edward might not fail from the family, repeated it at the baptism of every successive son. His infancy was nursed in the most tender manner by his aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten, to

whom he declares those to be indebted who were rejoiced at his having lived..

As soon as young Gibbon became capable of imbibing the rudiments of learning, he was placed under the domestic tuition of a Mr. Kirkby, a learned and unfortunate man, for whom, almost alone of his early instructors, he seems to entertain respect and gratitude. He received from him the rudiments of English and Latin ; but poor Kirkby, having one day unfortunately forgot to mention King George in his prayer, the zealous loyalty of old Gibbon prompted his immediate dismissal. Edward was then sent to the school of Kingston upon Thames. Here he made some progress in Latin, though his studies were frequently interrupted by ill health. At the end of two years, however, his mother died ; and this circumstance, it does not exactly appear how, occasioned his return to the parental roof. Here he again found himself under the care of his aunt, who now bestowed the same care in the cultivation of his mind, which she had formerly devoted to the strengthening of his constitution. Here he seems to have first imbibed that passion for study which continued ever after to be his ruling propensity. He indulged in a course of desultory reading, as inclination or curiosity prompted. The following account, given by himself, of his early studies, cannot fail to be interesting.

" I should, perhaps, be astonished, were it possible to ascertain the date at which a favourite tale was engraved, by frequent repetition, in my memory : the Cavern of the Winds, the Palace of Felicity, and the fatal moment, at the end of three months or centuries, when Prince Adolphus is overtaken by Time, who had worn out so many pair of wings in the pursuit. Before I left Kingston school, I was well acquainted with Pope's Homer, and the Arabian Nights Entertainments, two books which will always please, by the moving picture of human manners and specious mi-

racles: nor was I then capable of discerning that Pope's translation is a portrait endowed with every merit, except that of likeness to the original. The verses of Pope accustomed my ear to the sound of poetic harmony. In the death of Hector, and the shipwreck of Ulysses, I tasted the new emotions of terror and pity; and seriously disputed with my aunt on the vices and virtues of the heroes of the Trojan war. [From Pope's Homer to Dryden's Virgil was an easy transition; but I know not how, from some fault in the author, the translator, or the reader, the pious Æneas did not so forcibly seize on my imagination; and I derived more pleasure from Ovid's Metamorphoses, especially in the fall of Phæton, and the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses. My grandfather's right entered the door of a tolerable library; and I turned over many English pages of poetry and romance, of history and travels. Where a title attracted my eye, without fear or awe I snatched the volume from the shelf; and Mrs. Porteney, who indulged herself in moral and religious speculations, was more prone to encourage than to check a curiosity above the strength of a boy. This year, (1748) the twelfth of my age, I shall note as the most propitious to the growth of my intellectual stature.]

Another change took place in the state of the family by the bankruptcy of his grandfather, who absconded in consequence. His aunt then, with a becoming pride, resolved not to be dependent on the bounty of her friends. She submitted to the humble employment of keeping a boarding house for Westminster school, and thus earned a competence for her old age. This circumstance led to the plan of sending Edward to that seminary. His attendance, however, was interrupted by frequent intervals of ill health, and his disorder at length became so violent, that it was necessary to remove him from school, and send him to Bath. For two years succeeding, his scholastic instruction was

very irregular, and even, in a great measure, neglected. His real education was carried on at home, where he still continued his course of desultory studies. He resumes his account of them in the following terms :

" The curiosity which had been implanted in my infant mind, was still alive and active ; but my reason was not sufficiently informed to understand the value, or to lament the loss, of three precious years, from my entrance at Westminister to my admission at Oxford. Instead of repining at my long and frequent confinement to the chamber or the couch, I secretly rejoiced in those infirmities, which delivered me from the exercises of the school, and the society of my equals. As often as I was tolerably exempt from danger and pain, reading, free desultory reading, was the employment and comfort of my solitary hours. At Westminister my aunt sought only to amuse and indulge me ; in my stations at Bath and Winchester, at Buriton and Putney, a false compassion respected my sufferings ; and I was allowed, without controul or advice, to gratify the wanderings of an unripe taste. My indiscriminate appetite subsided by degrees in the *historic* line ; and since philosophy has exploded all innate ideas and natural propensities, I must ascribe this choice to the assiduous perusal of the Universal History, as the octavo volumes successively appeared. This unequal work, and a treatise of Hearne, the *Ductus Historicus*, referred and introduced me to the Greek and Roman historians ; to as many at least as were accessible to an English reader. All that I could find were greedily devoured, from Littlebury's lame Herodotus, and Spelman's valuable Xenophon, to the pompous folios of Gordon's Tacitus, and a ragged Prozopius of the beginning of the last century. The cheap acquisition of so much knowledge confirmed my dislike to the study of languages ; and I argued with Mrs. Porten, that, were I master of Greek and Latin, I must interpret to myself in Eng-

lish the thoughts of the original, and that such extem-
porary versions must be inferior to the elaborate trans-
lations of professed scholars ; a silly sophism, which
could not easily be confuted by a person ignorant of
any other language than her own. From the ancient
I leaped to the modern world ; many crude lumps of
Speed, Rapin, Mezeray, Davila, Machiavel, Father
Paul, Bower, &c. I devoured like so many novels ;
and I swallowed with the same voracious appetite the
descriptions of India and China, of Mexico and Peru.

“ My first introduction to the historic scenes, which
have since engaged so many years of my life, must be
ascribed to an accident. In the summer of 1751, I
accompanied my father on a visit to Mr. Hoare’s, in
Wiltshire ; but I was less delighted with the beauties
~~of Stonehenge, than with discovering in~~ the library a
common book, the Continuation of Eichard’s Roman
History, which is indeed executed with more skill and
taste than the previous work. To me the reigns of the
successors of Constantine were absolutely new ; and I
was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Da-
nube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly
dragged me from my intellectual feast. This transient
glance served rather to irritate than to appease my cu-
riosity ; and as soon as I returned to Bath, I procured
the second and third volumes of Howell’s History of the
World, which exhibited the Byzantine period on a
larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my
attention ; and some instinct of criticism directed me
to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley, an original in
every sense, first opened my eyes ; and I was led from
one book to another, till I had ranged round the circle
of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen, I had ex-
hausted all that could be learned in English of the
Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks ; and the
same ardour urged me to guess at the French of d’Her-
belot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pocock’s
Abulfaragius. Such vague and multifarious reading

could not teach me to think, to write, or to act ; and the only principle that darted a ray of light into the indigested chaos, was an early and rational application to the order of time and place. The maps of Cellarius and Wells imprinted in my mind the picture of ancient geography ; from Stranchius I imbibed the elements of chronology ; the Tables of Helvicus and Anderson, the Annals of Usher and Prideaux, distinguished the connection of events, and engraved the multitude of names and dates in a clear and indelible series. But, in the discussion of the first ages, I overleaped the bounds of modesty and use. In my childish balance I presumed to weigh the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton, which I could seldom study in the originals ; and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the septuagint with the Hebrew computation. I arrived at Oxford with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed."

To his residence at Oxford Mr. Gibbon looks back with no satisfaction. Instead of improving by the opportunities there afforded, he seems even to have lost that taste for reading which he had previously acquired. He fell into habits of idleness and dissipation, frequently absented himself, and settled to no plan of study. In short, he declares the fourteen months which he spent in Magdalen College to be the most idle and unprofitable of his whole life. Unwilling to take upon himself the whole blame of this lost period, he endeavours to throw it partly upon the institutions of the university. No controul or superintendence, he says, were exercised over him : he was allowed to attend or not as inclination prompted. " During the first weeks," says he, " I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room ; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure, I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with

a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony ; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence : the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment ; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use ; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection ; and, at the most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse, without labour or amusement, without advice or account."

About this time, however, his constitution strengthened, without any visible cause, and he was delivered from those complaints under which he had laboured. At the end of fourteen months, a long recess enabled him to spend two months at his father's house in Hampshire. It is remarkable, that the moment he arrived there his taste for books began to revive. He now wrote his first composition, marked by that taste for research and exotic history, which strongly predominated in his mind. It was entitled "The Age of Sesostris;" and the object was to prove that monarch to have been contemporary with Solomon.

On Gibbon's return to college, he entered upon the same round of dissipation as before. He made, in one winter, a visit to Bath, an excursion into Buckinghamshire, and four to London. He still retained, however, his old turn for research and controversy ; but it took a most singular direction. By reading the works of Roman Catholic divines, he became a convert to that religion. Two works of Bossuet were, he asserts, those which completed his conversion. His resolution was completely made up from books, before he saw or conversed with any priest of that persuasion. He was then, however, introduced to one in London, in whose presence he solemnly abjured the errors of heresy. He then wrote an elaborate letter to his father, announcing

and justifying this extraordinary step. His father, in the first paroxysm of anger, published what would have been more wisely concealed, and the gates of the university were shut against the young apostate.

It became now a very serious consideration for old Gibbon, in what manner this extraordinary malady might be banished from the mind of his son. After much deliberation, it was determined to send him to reside for some years at Lausanne, in Switzerland. Thither he was accordingly dispatched, and lodged in the house of M. Pavilliard, a calvinist minister. He has described in a lively manner his feelings on first arriving in this exile.

“ When I was thus suddenly cast on a foreign land, I found myself deprived of the use of speech and of hearing ; and, during some weeks, incapable not only of enjoying the ~~pleasures~~ of conversation, but even of asking or answering a question in the common intercourse of life. To a home-bred Englishman every object, every custom was offensive ; but the native of any country might have been disgusted with the general aspect of his lodging and entertainment. I had now exchanged my elegant apartment in Magdalen College, for a narrow gloomy street, the most unfrequented of an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber, ill contrived, and ill furnished, which, on the approach of winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull invisible heat of a stove. From a man, I was again degraded to the dependence of a schoolboy. M. Pavilliard managed my expences, which had been reduced to a diminutive state. I received a small monthly allowance for my pocket-money ; and helpless and awkward as I have ever been, I no longer enjoyed the indispensable comfort of a servant. My condition seemed as destitute of hope, as it was devoid of pleasure. I was separated for an indefinite, which appeared an infinite, term from my native country ; and I had

lost all connection with my catholic friends. I have since reflected with surprise, that as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith. Such was my first introduction to Lausanne; a place where I spent nearly five years with pleasure and profit, which I afterwards revisited without compulsion, and which I have finally selected as the most grateful retreat for the decline of my life."

He soon, however, became reconciled to his situation, and derived great benefits from the residence of Lausanne. He here entered upon a course of intense study. ~~He went nearly through a complete round~~ of the Latin classics, and their most celebrated commentators. He acquired also some acquaintance, though not very extensive, with Grecian literature. Grotius, Puffendorf, Locke, Crousaz, and Pascal, entered also into his round of study. He opened a correspondence with Crevier, the successor of Rollin, professor Breitinger of Zurich, and Matthew Gesner of Gottingen. He made also a journey through Switzerland. At this time too he became acquainted with Mademoiselle Curchod; but the nature of their connection will best be related in his own words, though somewhat more pompous than the subject requires.

" I hesitate, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. By this word I do not mean the polite attention, the gallantry, without hope or design, which has originated in the spirit of chivalry, and is interwoven with the texture of French manners. I understand by this passion, the union of desire, friendship, and tenderness, which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being.. I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and

though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Curchod were embellished by the virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was respectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content with a small salary and laborious duty, in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village, he bestowed a liberal, and even learned, education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages ; and in her short visits to some relatives at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity ; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment, and elegant in manners ; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honourably encouraged the connection. In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer flustered in her bosom ; she listened to the voice of truth and passion, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity ; but, on my return to England, I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle, I yielded to my fate ; I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son ; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits

of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died ; his stipend died with him ; his daughter retired to Geneva, where, by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother ; but in her lowest distress she maintained a spotless reputation, and a dignified behaviour. A rich banker of Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure ; and in the capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every ~~change of prosperity and逆境~~ he has reposed on the bosom of a faithful friend ; and Mademoiselle Carcchon is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy."

In the course of this residence at Lausanne, Gibbon was converted again to the religion of his parents. On Christmas 1754, after, as he states, a full conviction, he received the sacrament in the church of Lausanne. His father, hearing of his conversion, progress in learning, and propriety of conduct, determined to recall him ; a summons which he obeyed, though not apparently without some reluctance, so completely, during his absence, had his habits become those of a foreigner. His father had married again during his absence ; and Gibbon seems to have come over with considerable prejudices against his stepmother. These, however, were soon dissipated by acquaintance ; and they even became intimate friends. His residence was now divided between the town and the country ; and we shall describe, in his own words, the manner in which he spent his time in both. First, of his town life he says :

" The metropolis affords many amusements, which are open to all. It is itself an astonishing and perpe-

tual spectacle to the curious eye ; and each taste, each sense may be gratified by the variety of objects which will occur in the long circuit of a morning walk. I assiduously frequented the theatres at a very propitious era of the stage, when a constellation of excellent actors, both in tragedy and comedy, was eclipsed by the meridian brightness of Garrick, in the maturity of his judgment, and vigour of his performance. The pleasures of a town life are within the reach of every man who is regardless of his health, his money, and his company. By the contagion of example I was sometimes seduced ; but the better habits, which I had formed at Lausanne, induced me to seek a more elegant and rational society ; and if my search was less easy and successful than I might have hoped, I shall at present impute the failure to the disadvantages of my situation and character. Had the rank and fortune of my parents given them an annual establishment in London, their own house would have introduced me to a numerous and polite circle of acquaintance. But my father's taste had always preferred the highest and the lowest company, for which he was equally qualified ; and, after a twelve years retirement, he was no longer in the memory of the great with whom he had associated. I found myself a stranger in the midst of a vast and unknown city ; and at my entrance into life I was reduced to some dull family parties, and some scattered connections, which were not such as I should have chosen for myself. The most useful friends of my father were the Mallets : they received me with civility and kindness, at first on his account, and afterwards on my own ; and (if I may use Lord Chesterfield's words) I was soon *domesticated* in their house. Mr. Mallet, a name among the English poets, is praised by an unforgiving enemy for the ease and elegance of his conversation, and his wife was not destitute of wit or learning. By his assistance I was introduced to Lady Hervey, the mother of the present Earl of Bristol.

Her age and infirmities confined her at home ; her dinners were select ; in the evening her house was open to the best company of both sexes and all nations ; nor was I displeased at her preference and affectation of the manners, the language, and the literature of France. But my progress in the English world was in general left to my own efforts, and those efforts were languid and slow. I had not been endowed by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom ; nor would it be reasonable to complain of the just consequences of my sickly childhood, foreign education, and reserved temper. While coaches were rattling through Bond Street, I have passed many a solitary evening in my lodging with my books. My studies were sometimes interrupted by a sigh which I breathed towards Lausanne ; and on the approach of spring I withdrew without reluctance from the noisy and extensive scene of crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure. In each of the twenty-five years of my acquaintance with London (1758–1783) the prospect gradually brightened ; and this unfavourable picture most properly belongs to the first period after my return from Switzerland."

His country life seems to have been little more to his taste :

" As my stay at Buriton was always voluntary, I was received and dismissed with smiles ; but the comforts of my retirement did not depend on the ordinary pleasures of the country. My father could never inspire me with his love and knowledge of farming. I never handled a gun, I seldom mounted an horse ; and my philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where I was long detained by the sedentary amusement of reading or meditation. At home I occupied a pleasant and spacious apartment ; the library on the same floor was soon considered as my peculiar domain ; and I might say with truth, that I was never less alone than when by myself. My sole complaint

which I piously suppressed, arose from the kind restraint imposed on the freedom of my time. By the habit of early rising I always secured a sacred portion of the day, and many scattered moments were stolen, and employed by my studious industry. But the family hours of breakfast, of dinner, of tea, and of supper, were regular and long: after breakfast Mrs. Gibbon expected my company in her dressing-room; after tea my father claimed my conversation and the perusal of the newspapers; and in the midst of an interesting work I was often called down to receive the visit of some idle neighbours. Their dinners and visits required, in due season, a similar return, and I dreaded the period of the full moon, which was usually reserved for our more distant excursions. I could not refuse attending my father, in the summer of 1759, to the races at Stockbridge, Reading, and Odiham, where he had entered a horse for the hunter's plate; and I was not displeased with the sight of our Olympic games, the beauty of the spot, the fleetness of the horses, and, the gay tumult of the numerous spectators."

During this period, however, he wrote his "Essai sur l'Etude de la Litterature," which was received with great applause in France, and neglected in England, perhaps chiefly from the study of the French language being then less common. He never would suffer this work to be reprinted; and, though originally published at three shillings, it afterwards, as his fame advanced, was frequently sold for a guinea or thirty shillings.

Mr. Gibbon now entered on a mode of life uncongenial to all his former habits. A regiment of Hampshire militia being raised, he was persuaded to accept the office of captain. Although the time spent on this service was far from agreeable, he admits it to have been useful to him in several respects. The habits," says he, "of a sedentary life were usefully broken by the duties of an active profession: in the healthful exercise of the field, I hunted with a battalion, instead of a pack;

and at that time I was ready, at any hour of the day or night, to fly from quarters to London, from London to quarters, on the slightest call of private or regimental business. But my principal obligation to the militia, was the making me an Englishman and a soldier. After my foreign education, with my reserved temper, I should long have continued a stranger in my native country, had I not been shaken in this various scene of new faces and new friends; had not experience forced me to feel the characters of our leading men, the state of parties, the forms of office, and the operation of our civil and military system. In this peaceful service, I imbibed the rudiments of the language, and science of tactics, which opened a new field of study and observation. I diligently read, and meditated, the *Memoires Militaires* of *Quintus Icilius* (Mr. Guichardt), the only writer who has united the merits of a professor and a veteran. The discipline and evolutions of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion; and the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers, the reader may smile, has not been useless to the historian of the Roman empire."

After spending in this manner two years and a half, he went to make the tour of Europe. He began by spending three months and a half at Paris; and a much longer time, he conceives, might have been agreeably filled. The account which he gives, in letters to Mrs. Gibbon and his father, of the societies of that capital, though short, will be found interesting. To Mrs. Gibbon he says :

" Paris, in most respects, has fully answered my expectations. I have a number of very good acquaintance, which increase every day; for nothing is so easy as the making them here. Instead of complaining of the want of them, I begin already to think of making a choice. Next Sunday, for instance, I have only three invitations to dinner. Either in the houses you are already acquainted, you meet with people who ask you to come,

and see them, or some of your friends offer themselves to introduce you. When I speak of these connections, I mean chiefly for dinner and the evening. Suppers as yet I am pretty much a stranger to, and I fancy shall continue so; for Paris is divided into two species, who have but little communication with each other. The one, who is chiefly connected with the men of letters, dine very much at home, are glad to see their friends, and pass the evenings till about nine in agreeable and rational conversation. The others are the most fashionable, sup in numerous parties, and always play, or rather game, both before and after supper. You may easily guess which sort suits me best. Indeed, madam, we may say what we please of the frivolity of the French, but I do assure you, that in a fortnight passed at Paris, I have heard more conversation worth remembering, and seen more men of letters among the people of fashion, than I had done in two or three winters in London. Amongst my acquaintance, I cannot help mentioning M. Helvetius, the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit*. I met him at dinner at Madam Geoffrin's, where he took great notice of me, made me a visit next day, has ever since treated me, not in a polite but in a friendly manner. Besides being a sensible man, an agreeable companion, and the worthiest creature in the world, he has a very pretty wife, an hundred thousand livres a year, and one of the best tables in Paris."

To his father he adds:

"I have now passed nearly a month in this place, and I can say with truth, that it has answered my most sanguine expectations. The buildings of every kind, the libraries, the public diversions, take up a great part of my time; and I have already found several houses where it is both very easy and very agreeable to be acquainted. Lady Harvey's recommendation to Madam Geoffrin was a most excellent one. Her house is a very good one; regular dinners there every Wednesday,

and the best company of Paris, in men of letters and people of fashion. It was at her house I connected myself with M. Helvetius, who, from his heart his head, and his fortune, is a most valuable man.

"At his house I was introduced to the Baron d'Olbach, who is a man of parts and fortune, and has two dinners every week. The other houses I am known in are the Duchess d'Aiguillon's, Madame la Comtesse de Froulay's, Madame du Bocage, Madame Boyer, M. le Marquis de Mirabeau, and M. de Foucemagn. All these people have their different merit; in some I meet with good dinners; in others, societies for the evening; and in all, good sense, entertainment, and civility, which, as I have no favours to ask, or business to transact with them, is sufficient for me. Their men of letters are not ~~so~~ ^{as} agreeable and communicative as I expected. My letters to them did not interest them, but were very little necessary. My book had been of great service to me, and the compliments I have received upon it would make me insufferably vain, if I laid any stress on them. When I take notice of the civilities I have received, I must take notice too of what I have seen of a contrary behaviour. You know how much I always built upon the Count de Caylus: he has not been of the least use to me. With great difficulty I have seen him, and that is all. I do not, however, attribute his behaviour to pride, or dislike to me, but solely to the man's general character, which seems to be a very odd one."

After spending some time at Lausanne, he made the tour of Italy, with high gratification, though he has given a very succinct notice of it. The view of Rome and its illustrious monuments kindled an enthusiasm in which he seldom indulged. "At the distance of twenty-five years," says he, "I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the *eternal city*. After a sleepless night, I trode with a lost step the

ruins of the forum, each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar fell, was at once present to my eye, and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation.² After spending six weeks at Naples, he then returned to his native country, and to his former mode of life. The five years which now followed were, as he states, passed with the least enjoyment, and remembered with the least satisfaction, of any of his life. He was again doomed to the noise, turbulence, and hurry of a military life, which allowed him only a few occasional intervals of study. He had never made choice of any profession, but had declined that of the law, which Mrs. Gibbon proposed. He felt now the want of independent income, and professional importance. His fortune could only be increased by the death of his father, which he distinctly foreseen, and the apprehension of his old age being left entirely destitute. He found leisure, however, for various excursions into the fields of literature. He entered into a controversy with Warburton, which he carried on with equal learning and acrimony. In conjunction with M. Deyverdun, an intimate friend, whom he had formed at Lausanne, he undertook a journal, entitled "Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne," which, however, met with little success. He had now decidedly turned his ambition to the production of a historical work, and had for many years been revolving various subjects in his mind. The expedition of Charles VIII of France into Italy; the crusade of Richard I; the wars of the barons against John and Henry III of England; the history of Edward the Black Prince; the lives, with comparisons, of Henry V, with the emperor Titus; the life of Sir Philip Sidney, that of the Marquis of Montrose, and of Sir Walter Raleigh, were successively planned and rejected. The history of the revolutions of Switzerland took deeper possession of his mind. He entered into a long course of research on

the subject, and even wrote the first book, which, by a singular choice, he composed in the French language. It was disapproved of, however, by a literary society of foreigners in London, to whom he read it; and though Hume approved, it was coldly, and with an exception to the language in which it was written. He therefore abandoned this design, and finally fixed upon his grand scheme of illustrating the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

In 1770, his father died. Gibbon appears to have been a dutiful son, and to have sincerely lamented this event, though it bestowed on him independence and an increase of fortune. He began immediately to release himself from all the fetters which had detained him from his favorite pursuit, and soon enabled [REDACTED] introduced into parliament; but never could acquire courage to open his lips. He devoted himself almost wholly to the composition of his history, which proceeded with rapid steps. The following is his own account of the wide range of preparatory study to which he submitted:

"The classics, as low as Tacitus, the younger Pliny, and Juvenal were my old and familiar companions. I insensibly plunged into the ocean of the Augustan History; and in the descending series I investigated, with my pen always in my hand, the original records, both Greek and Latin, from Dion Cassius to Ammianus Marcellinus; from the reign of Trajan to the last age of the Western Cæsars. The subsidiary rays of medals and inscriptions, of geography and chronology, were thrown on their proper objects; and I applied the collections of Tillemont, whose inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius, to fix and arrange within my reach the loose and scattered atoms of historical information. Through the darkness of the middle ages I explored my way in the annals and antiquities of Italy of the learned Muratori; and diligent-

ly compared them with the parallel or transverse lines of Sigonius and Maffei, Baronius and Pagi, till I almost grasped the ruins of Rome in the fourteenth century, without suspecting that this final chapter must be attained by the labour of six quartos and twenty years. Among the books which I purchased, the Theodosian Code, with the commentary of James Godefroy, must be gratefully remembered. I used it (and much I used it) as a work of history, rather than of jurisprudence; but in every light it may be considered as a full and capacious repository of the political state of the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. As I believed, and as I still believe, that the propagation of the gospel, and the triumph of the church, are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and ~~contrasted the narratives and apologetics of the~~ Christians themselves, with the glances of candour or enmity which the pagans have cast on the rising sects. The Jewish and heathen testimonies, as they are collected and illustrated by Dr. Lardner, directed, without superseding, my search of the originals; and in an ample dissertation on the miraculous darkness of the passion, I privately drew my conclusions from the silence of an unbelieving age. I have assembled the preparatory studies, directly or indirectly relative to my history; but, in strict equity, they must be spread beyond this period of my life, over the two summers (1771 and 1772) that elapsed between my father's death and my settlement in London."

At length, in February 1776, this great work was presented to the public. It was received with an enthusiasm of admiration; three editions, rapidly succeeded, scarcely satisfied the curiosity of the public: the book, as he expresses it, was on every table, and almost on every toilette. The following letters from his great contemporaries must have gratified him still more highly. The first we shall give is from Hume.

" As I ran through your volume of history with great avidity and impatience, I cannot forbear discovering somewhat of the same impatience in returning you thanks for your agreeable present, and expressing the satisfaction which the performance has given me. Whether I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I must regard the work as equally the object of esteem; and I own, that if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance from an Englishman in our age would have given me some surprise. You may smile at this sentiment; but as it seems to me that your countrymen, for almost a whole generation, have given themselves up to barbarous and absurd faction, and have totally neglected all politics, I hardly expect any valuable production ever to come from them. I know it will give you pleasure (as it did me) to find that all men of letters in this place, concur in their admiration of your work, and in their anxious desire of your continuing it."

The next from Dr. Robertson to Mr. Strachan.

" Since my last, I have read Mr. Gibbon's history with much attention, and great pleasure. It is a work of very high merit indeed. He possesses that industry of research, without which no man deserves the name of an historian. His narrative is perspicuous and interesting; his style is elegant and forcible, though in some passages I think rather too laboured, and in others too quaint. But these defects are amply compensated by the beauty of the general flow of language, and a very peculiar happiness in many of his expressions. I have traced him in many of his quotations (for experience has taught me to suspect the accuracy of my brother penmen), and I find he refers to no passage but what he has seen with his own eyes. I hope the book will be as successful as it deserves to be. I have not yet read the two last chapters, but am sorry,

from what I have heard of them, that he has taken such a tone in them as will give great offence, and hurt the sale of the book."

The last from Mr. Ferguson to Mr: Gibbon himself.

Gibbon, however, was soon assailed in a different manner. His work bore strongly the stamp of scepti-

cal opinions, which he had unfortunately imbibed, though at what period of his life does not precisely appear. This roused the pens of a multitude of adversaries, many doubtless prompted by the best motives, though the intemperance of some did little honour to the cause which they defended. The following sentiments of Mr. Gibbons, and his estimate of the merit of his opponents, is curious from the mixture of candour and irritability which it exhibits.

" Had I believed that the majority of English readers were so fondly attached even to the name and shadow of christianity ; had I foreseen that the pious, the timid, and the prudent, would feel, or affect to feel, with such exquisite sensibility ; I might, perhaps, have softened the two ~~conditio~~ chapters, which would create ~~the~~ But the shaft was shot, the alarm was sounded, and I ~~could~~ only rejoice, that if the voice of our priests was clamorous and bitter, their hands were disarmed from the powers of persecution. I adhered to the wise resolution of trusting myself and my writings to the candour of the public, till Mr. Davies of Oxford presumed to attack, not the faith, but the fidelity, of the historian. *My vindication*, expressive of less anger than contempt, amused for a moment the busy and -idle metropolis ; and the most rational part of the laity, and even of the clergy, appear to have been satisfied of my innocence and accuracy. I would not print this *vindication* in quarto, lest it ~~would~~ be bound and preserved with the history itself. At the distance of twelve years, I calmly affirm my judgment of Davies, Chelsum, &c. A victory over such antagonists was a sufficient humiliation. They, however, were rewarded in this world. Poor Chelsum was indeed neglected ; and I dare not boast the making Dr. Watson a bishop ; he is a prelate of a large mind and liberal spirit ; but I enjoyed the pleasure of giving a royal pension to Mr. Davies, and of collating Dr. Apthorpe to an archiepiscopal living. Their suc-

ess encouraged the zeal of Taylor the Arian,* and Milner the methodist,† with many others, whom it would be difficult to remember, and tedious to rehearse. The list of my adversaries, however, was graced with the more respectable names of Dr. Priestley, Sir David Dalrymple, and Dr. White; and every polemic, of either university, discharged his sermon or pamphlet against the impenetrable silence of the Roman historian. In his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Dr. Priestley threw down his two gauntlets to Bishop Hurd and Mr. Gibbon. I declined the challenge in a letter, exhorting my opponent to enlighten the world by his philosophical discoveries, and to remember that the merit of his predecessor Servetus is now reduced to a single passage, which indicates the smaller circulation of the blood through the lungs, from and to the heart. Instead of listening to this friendly advice, the dastardly philosopher of Birmingham continued to fire away his double battery against those who believed too little, and those who believed too much. From my replies he has nothing to hope or fear; but his Socinian shield has repeatedly been pierced by the spear of Horsley, and his trumpet of sedition may at length awaken the magistrates of a free country.

"The profession and rank of Sir David Dalrymple (now a lord of session) has given a more decent colour

* The stupendous title, *Thoughts on the Causes of the grand Apostacy*, at first agitated my nerves, till I discovered that it was the apostacy of the whole church, since the Council of Nice, from Mr. Taylor's private religion. His book is a thorough mixture of high enthusiasm and low buffoonery, and the Millenium is a fundamental article of his creed.

† From his grammar-school at Kingston upon Hull, Mr. Joseph Milner pronounces an anathema against all national religion. His faith is a divine taste, a spiritual inspiration; his church is a mystic and invisible body; the natural christians, such as Mr. Locke, who believe and interpret the scriptures, are, in his judgment, no better than profane infidels.

to his style. But he scrutinized each separate passage of the two chapters with the dry minuteness of a special pleader ; and as he was always solicitous to make, he may have succeeded sometimes in finding, a flaw. In his Annals of Scotland, he has shewn himself a diligent collector and an accurate critic.

" I have praised, and I still praise, the eloquent sermons which were preached in St. Mary's pulpit at Oxford by Dr. White. If he assaulted me with some degree of illiberal acrimony, in such a place, and before such an audience, he was obliged to speak the language of the country. I smiled at a passage in one of his private letters to Mr. Badcock : " The part where we encounter Gibbon must be brilliant and striking."

~~Mr. Gibbon was soon after employed by ministers~~ ~~to go to France, on the breaking~~ ~~out of war with that country.~~ In reward for this service, he was appointed one of the Lords of Trade, with a salary of 7 or L.800 a-year. His connection with ministers, however, lost him his seat in parliament ; and in three years the Board of Trade was abolished by Mr. Burke's reform bill, the operation of which, he has the candour to acknowledge, was in this instance salutary. He was thus, however, deprived of the means of supporting the style of expence to which he had become accustomed ; which, with a variety of other considerations, determined him to extricate himself, and fix his residence again at Lausanne. Before his departure, in April 1781, he had published the second and third volumes of his history, which were received with attention, though somewhat more coldly than the first. This, it is probable, was the mere natural consequence of the gloss of novelty being worn off.

Our readers will probably be desirous of seeing Mr. Gibbon's own account of his mode of life, and the attractions which fixed him at Lausanne.

"My friends had been kindly apprehensive that I should not be able to exist in a Swiss town at the foot of the Alps, after having so long conversed with the first men of the first cities of the world. Such lofty

" In the month of August 1784, Prince Henry of Prussia, in his way to Paris, passed three days at Lau-sanne. His military conduct has been praised by professional men ; his character has been vilified by the wit and malice of a da&emon ;* but I was flattered by his affability, and entertained by his conversation.

" In his tour of Switzerland (September 1783) Mr. Fox gave me two days of free and private society. He seemed to feel, and even to envy, the happiness of my situation ; while I admired the powers of a superior man, as they are blended in his attractive character with the softness and simplicity of a child. Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempt from the taint of malevolence, vanity, or falsehood."

His labour, in this retirement, proceeded with great activity ; and on the 27th June 1787 he put the last hand to this celebrated work. The description which he gives of his feelings on this occasion, is very striking and memorable. " It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts, which have seldom occurred in the composition

* *Memoires Secrètes de la Cour de Berlin.*

of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.”*

In order to superintend the publication of the three last volumes, he visited England, where he was received with enthusiasm by a numerous circle of friends. Nothing, however, could dissuade him from returning, and again fixing his residence in his favourite retirement. Before following him thither, however, we cannot forbear inserting two letters received at the close of his historical career, from two most competent judges, Dr. Robertson and Dr. Adam Smith. Dr. Robertson follows:

“ Dear Sir,—Long before this I could have acknowledged the receipt of your most acceptable present; but for several weeks I have been afflicted with a violent fit of deafness, and that unsocial malady is always accompanied with such a degree of languor, as renders even the writing of a letter an effort. During my solitude the perusal of your book has been my chief amusement and consolation. I have gone through it once with great attention, and am now advanced to the last volume in my second reading. I ventured to predict the superior excellence of the volumes lately published, and I have not been a false prophet. Indeed, when I consider the extent of your undertaking,

* Extract from Mr. Gibbon's Common-place Book.

The IVth Volume of the History
of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, } begun March 1st, 1782—ended June 1782.

The Vth Volume, } begun July 1784—ended May 1st, 1786.

The VIth Volume, } begun May 18th, 1786—ended June 27th, 1787.

These three volumes were sent to press August 15th, 1787, and the whole impression was concluded April following.

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and the immense labour of historical and philosophic research requisite towards executing every part of it, I am astonished that all this should have been accomplished by one man.' I know no example, in any age or nation, of such a vast body of valuable and elegant information communicated by any individual. I feel, however, some degree of mortification mingled with my astonishment. Before you began your historic career, I used to pride myself in being at least the most industrious historian of the age ; but now, alas ! I can pretend no longer even to that praise, and must say, as Pliny did of his uncle, *Si comparer illi sum desidiosissimus.* Your style appears to me improved in these new volumes ; by the habit of writing, you write with greater ease. I am sorry to find that our ideas on the effects of the crusades do not altogether coincide. I considered that ~~your opinion was well founded~~ and cannot help thinking that my opinion was well founded. I shall consult the authorities to which I refer ; for when my sentiments differ from yours, I have some reason to distrust them, and I may possibly trouble you with a letter on the subject. I am much flattered with the manner in which you have so often mentioned my name. *Latus sum laudari a te laudato tiro.* I feel much satisfaction in having been distinguished by the two historians of my own times, whose favourable opinion I was most ambitious of obtaining."

The praise of Dr. Smith is still more unqualified. "I have ten thousand apologies to make, for not having long ago returned you my best thanks for the very agreeable present you made me of the three last volumes of your history. I cannot express to you the pleasure it gives me to find, that by the universal assent of every man of taste and learning, whom I either know or correspond with, it sets you at the very head of the whole literary tribe at present existing in Europe."

Mr. Gibbon, on his return, found Lausanne very different from the place he had left it. His friend Deyverdun, who had long lived under the same roof with him, was in a state of decay ; and, after a year of anxious attendance, he had the affliction of losing him. The French revolution, an event which he viewed from the first with deep alarm and reprobation, cruelly interrupted the tranquillity of his retreat. The gay and easy society, in which he delighted, was transformed into an assemblage of noisy politicians ; the crowds of emigrants who sought refuge at Lausanne did not enliven that residence ; and at length the flames of war began to rage in his immediate vicinity. During this period, therefore, he did not proceed with any great plausibility, but merely amused himself with a variety of studies and occupations. He composed, however, those memoirs of himself, which were published after his death ; and he formed the plan of a very extensive work, combining history and biography. He proposed to write the lives of the distinguished military and political characters in Britain, from the reign of Henry VIII, to the present age. This, he conceived, would be rather an amusement than a labour ; the materials were accessible, the subject agreeable, and so attractive to English readers, that it could scarcely fail of success. It was doubtless in part with a view to this undertaking, that he determined to spend a year in England, and his visit was delayed only by the difficulties of the journey through revolutionized France. A circumstance, however, occurred, which induced him to set these at defiance. Lord Sheffield, with whom he had been long united by ties of the most intimate friendship, had the misfortune of losing his lady, to whom he was tenderly attached. Gibbon set out, without a moment's delay, to console his friend under this affliction. He accomplished his journey, through Germany and the Netherlands, with greater ease than he had expected ; and, landing in England in June 1793,

proceeded immediately to Lord Sheffield's house. He, himself, however, was now in a situation deeply afflictive to his friends. A dropsy, which had long lurked in his constitution, assumed the most alarming symptoms. Repeated tappings produced only a temporary relief; and at length his constitution became no longer able to struggle against the violence of the disease. There was nothing particularly memorable in his last moments; but as it must always be interesting to view the behaviour of so great a man, in circumstances so trying, we shall present our readers with Lord Shefield's narrative.

" After I left him, on Tuesday afternoon (Jan. 14, 1794) he saw some company, Lady Lucan and Lady Spencer, and thought himself well enough at night to omit the opium draught, which he had been used to take for some time. ~~He slept very indifferently: before~~ ~~the next morning he rose, but could not eat his breakfast.~~ However, he appeared tolerably well, yet complained at times of a pain in his stomach. At one o'clock he received a visit of an hour from Madame de Sylva, and at three, his friend Mr. Crauford, of Auchinames (whom he always mentioned with particular regard), called, and staid with him till past five o'clock: They talked, as usual, on various subjects; and twenty hours before his death, Mr. Gibbon happened to fall into a conversation not uncommon with him, on the probable duration of his life. He said, that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. About six, he ate the wing of a chicken, and drank three glasses of Madeira. After dinner he became very uneasy and impatient; complained a good deal, and appeared so weak, that his servant was alarmed. Mr. Gibbon had sent to his friend and relation, Mr. Robert Darell, whose house was not far distant, desiring to see him, and adding, that he had something particular to say. But, unfortunately, this desired interview never took place;

" During the evening he complained much of his stomach, and of a disposition to vomit. Soon after nine, he took his opium draught, and went to bed. About ten he complained of much pain, and desired that warm napkins might be applied to his stomach. He almost incessantly expressed a sense of pain till about four o'clock in the morning, when he said he found his stomach much easier. About seven, the servant asked, whether he should send for Mr. Farquhar? He answered, No; that he was as well as he had been the day before. About half past eight, he got out of bed, and said that he was "*plus adroit*" than he had been for three months past, and got into bed again, without assistance, better than usual. About nine, ~~he said that he would rise.~~ The servant, however, persuaded him to remain in bed till Mr. Farquhar, who was expected at eleven, should come. Till about that hour he spoke with great facility. Mr. Farquhar came at the time appointed, and he was then visibly dying. When the *valet de chambre* returned, after attending Mr. Farquhar out of the room, Mr. Gibbon said, *Pourquoi est ce que vous me quittez?* This was about half past eleven. At twelve he drank some brandy and water from a tea-pot, and desired his favourite servant to stay with him. These were the last words he pronounced articulately. To the last he preserved his senses; and when he could no longer speak, his servant having asked a question, he made a sign, to shew that he understood him. He was quite tranquil, and did not stir; his eyes half shut. About a quarter before one he ceased to breathe. The *valet de chambre* observed, that Mr. Gibbon did not at any time shew the least sign of alarm, or apprehension of death; and it does not appear that he ever thought himself in danger, unless his desire to speak to Mr. Darel may be considered in that light."

Our readers will probably by this time have formed a pretty correct estimate of the character of Mr. Gib-

bon. The desire of knowledge, and the ambition of literary fame, formed evidently his ruling passions; and an indefatigable application enabled him to accomplish labours, from which most men would have shrunk. An easy and philosophic good humour seems after this to have formed the most prominent feature in his character. His temper was not peculiarly marked with warmth or enthusiasm; yet he performed with fidelity all the relative and social duties. If we cannot avoid lamenting the errors of his religious opinions, and the zeal with which he propagated them, some apology may be found in the neglect of his education, and the character of the literary societies into which he was early introduced.

In regard to the literary talents of Mr. Gibbon, after having successively exhibited the sentiments of the most illustrious of his contemporaries, it can scarcely be necessary to interpose our own. The public voice has long since enrolled him among the standard writers in the English language; nor is any library accounted complete, till it has been enriched with the "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

PREFACE.

IT is not my intention to detain the reader by expatiating on the variety, or the importance of the subject, which I have undertaken to treat; since the merit of the choice would serve to render the weakness of the execution still more apparent, and still less excusable. But as I have presumed to lay before the public a *first* volume only* of the History of the Decline and Fall² of the Roman Empire, it will perhaps be expected that I should explain, in a few words, the nature and limits of my general plan.

The memorable series of revolutions, which, in the course of about thirteen centuries, gradually undermined, and at length destroyed, the solid fabric of human greatness, may, with some propriety, be divided into the three following periods :

* The first volume of the quarto, which is now contained in the two first volumes of the octavo edition.

I. The first of these periods may be traced from the age of Trajan and the Antonines, when the Roman monarchy, having attained its full strength and maturity, began to verge towards its decline; and will extend to the subversion of the Western Empire, by the barbarians of Germany and Scythia, the rude ancestors of the most polished nations of modern Europe. This extraordinary revolution, which subjected Rome to the power of a Gothic conqueror, was completed about the beginning of the sixth century.

II. The second period of the Decline and Fall of Rome, may be supposed to commence with the reign of Justinian, who by his laws, as well as by his victories, restored a transient splendour to the Eastern Empire. It will comprehend the invasion of Italy by the Lombards; the conquest of the Asiatic and African provinces by the Arabs, who embraced the religion of Mahomet; the revolt of the Ronian people against the feeble princes of Constantinople; and the elevation of Charlemagne, who, in the year eight hundred, established the second, or German empire of the West.

III. The last and longest of these periods includes about six centuries and a half;

from the revival of the Western Empire, till the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the extinction of a degenerate race of princes, who continued to assume the titles of Cæsar and Augustus, after their dominions were contracted to the limits of a single city; in which the language, as well as manners, of the ancient Romans, had been long since forgotten. The writer who should undertake to relate the events of this period, would find himself obliged to enter into the general history of the crusades, as far as they contributed to the ruin of the Greek empire; and he would scarcely be able to restrain his curiosity from making some inquiry into the state of the city of Rome during the darkness and confusion of the middle ages.

As I have ventured, perhaps too hastily, to commit to the press a work, which, in every sense of the word, deserves the epithet of imperfect, I consider myself as contracting an engagement to finish, most probably in a second volume,* the first of

* The author, as it frequently happens, took an inadequate measure of his growing work. The remainder of the first period has filled two volumes in quarto, being the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of the octavo edition.

these memorable periods ; and to deliver to the public the complete History of the Decline and Fall of Rome, from the age of the Antonines to the subversion of the Western Empire. With regard to the subsequent periods, though I may entertain some hopes, I dare not presume to give any assurances. The execution of the extensive plan which I have described would connect the ancient and modern history of the world ; but it would require many years of health, of leisure, and of perseverance.

Bentinck Street, February 1, 1776.

P. S. The entire History, which is now published, of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, abundantly discharges my engagements with the public. Perhaps their favourable opinion may encourage me to prosecute a work, which, however laborious it may seem, is the most agreeable occupation of my leisure hours.

Bentinck Street, March 1, 1781.

An author easily persuades himself that the public opinion is still favourable to his labours; and I have now embraced the serious resolution of proceeding to the last period of my original design, and of the Roman Empire, the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, in the year one thousand four hundred and fifty-three. The most patient reader, who computes that three ponderous volumes* have been already employed on the events of four centuries, may, perhaps, be alarmed at the long prospect of nine hundred years. But it is not my intention to expatiate with the same minuteness on the whole series of the Byzantine history. At our entrance into this period, the reign of Justinian, and the conquests of the Mahometans, will deserve and detain our attention; and the last age of Constantinople (the crusades and the Turks) is connected with the revolutions of modern Europe. From the seventh to the eleventh century, the obscure interval will be supplied by a concise narrative of such facts as may still appear either interesting or important.

Bentinck Street, March 1, 1782.

* The first six volumes of the octavo edition.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIRST OCTAVO EDITION.

THE History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire is now delivered to the public in a more convenient form. Some alterations and improvements had presented themselves to my mind ; but I was unwilling to injure or offend the purchasers of the preceding editions. The accuracy of the corrector of the press has been already tried and approved ; and, perhaps, I may stand excused, if, amidst the avocations of a busy winter, I have preferred the pleasures of composition and study to the minute diligence of revising a former publication.

Bentwick Street, April 20, 1783.

DILIGENCE and accuracy are the only merits which an historical writer may ascribe to himself; if any merit, indeed, can be assumed from the performance of an indispensable duty. I may, therefore, be allowed to say, that I have carefully examined all the original materials that could illustrate the subject which I had undertaken to treat. Should I ever complete ~~the extensive design~~ which has been sketched out in the preface, I might perhaps conclude it with a critical account of the authors consulted during the progress of the whole work; and however such an attempt might incur the censure of ostentation, I am persuaded, that it would be susceptible of entertainment, as well as information.

At present I shall content myself with a single observation. The biographers who, under the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine, composed, or rather compiled, the lives of the emperors, from Hadrian to the sons of Carus, are usually mentioned, under the names of *Ælius Spartianus*, *Julius Capitolinus*, *Ælius Lampridius*, *Vulcatius Gallicanus*, *Trebellius Pollio*, and *Flavius Vopiscus*. But there is so much perplexity in the titles of the MSS.; and so many disputes have arisen among the critics (see Fa-

bricius, Biblioth. Latin. l. iii, c. 6) concerning their number, their names, and their respective property, that for the most part I have quoted them without distinction, under the general and well-known title of the *Augustan History*.

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16



THE
HISTORY

OF THE

DECLINE AND FALL

OF THE
ROMAN EMPIRE

CHAP. I.

The extent and military force of the empire in the age of the Antonines.

IN the second century of the christian æra, the CHAP.
empire of Rome comprehended the fairest part ^{I.} of the earth, and the most civilized portion of mankind. The frontiers of that extensive monarchy were guarded by ancient renown and disciplined valour. The gentle, but powerful influence of laws and manners had gradually cemented the union of the provinces. Their peaceful inhabitants enjoyed and abused the advantages of wealth and luxury. The image of a free constitution was preserved with decent reverence: the Roman senate appeared to possess the sovereign authority, and devolved on the emperors all the executive powers of government. During a happy period of more than ^{D. 98-180.}

CHAP. fourscore years, the public administration was conducted by the virtues and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines. It is the design of this, and of the two succeeding chapters, to describe the prosperous condition of their empire; and afterwards, from the death of Marcus Antoninus, to deduce the most important circumstances of its decline and fall; a revolution which will ever be remembered, and is still felt by the nations of the earth.

Moderation
of
Augustus.

The principal conquests of the Romans were achieved under the republic; and the emperors, for the most part, were satisfied with preserving those dominions which had been acquired by the policy of the senate, the active emulation of the consuls, and the martial enthusiasm of the people. The seven first centuries were filled with a rapid succession of triumphs; but it was reserved for Augustus, to relinquish the ambitious design of subduing the whole earth, and to introduce a spirit of moderation into the public councils. Inclined to peace by his temper and situation, it was easy for him to discover, that Rome, in her present exalted situation, had much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms; and that, in the prosecution of remote wars, the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious, and less beneficial. The experience of Augustus added weight to these salutary reflections, and effectually convinced him that, by the prudent vigour of his counsels, it

would be easy to secure every concession, which the safety or the dignity of Rome might require from the most formidable barbarians. Instead of exposing his person and his legions to the arrows of the Parthians, he obtained, by an honourable treaty, the restitution of the standards and prisoners which had been taken in the defeat of Crassus.*

~~His greatest conquests in the early part of his reign,~~
 attempted the reduction of Ethiopia and Arabia Felix. They marched near a thousand miles to the south of the tropic; but the heat of the climate soon repelled the invaders, and protected the unwary march of the Roman legions. The northern countries of Europe scarcely deserved the expence and labour of conquest. The forests and morasses of Germany were filled with a hardy race of barbarians, who despised life when it was separated from freedom; and though, on the first attack, they seemed to yield to the weight of the Roman power, they soon, by a signal act of despair, regained their independence, and reminded Augustus of the vicissitude of for-

* Dion Cassius (l. liv, p. 736), with the annotations of Heymar, who has collected all that Roman vanity has left upon the subject. The marble of Ancyra, on which Augustus recorded his own exploits, asserts that he compelled the Parthians to restore the ensigns of Crassus.

* Strabo (l. xvi, p. 780), Pliny the elder (Hist. Natur. l. vi, c. 32-35), and Dion Cassius (l. lili, p. 723, and l. liv, p. 734), have left us very curious details concerning these wars. The Romans made themselves masters of Maribah, or Merab, a city of Arabia Felix, well known to the Orientals (see Abulfeda and the Nubian geography, p. 52). They were arrived within three days journey of the spick country, the rich object of their invasion.

CHAP. tune.^c On the death of that emperor, his testament was publicly read in the senate. He bequeathed, as a valuable legacy to his successors, the advice of confining the empire within those limits, which nature seemed to have placed as its permanent bulwarks and boundaries; on the west the Atlantic ocean; the Rhine and Danube on the north; the Euphrates on the east; and towards the south, the sandy deserts of Arabia and Africa.^d

Imitated
by his suc-
cessors.

Happily for the repose of mankind, the moderate system recommended by the wisdom of Augustus was adopted by the fears and vices of his immediate successors. Engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the exercise of tyranny, the first Caesars seldom shewed themselves to the armies, or to the provinces; nor were they disposed to suffer, that those triumphs which their indolence neglected, should be usurped by the conduct and valour of their lieutenants. The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the imperial prerogative; and it became the duty, as well as interest, of every Roman general, to guard the frontiers entrusted to his care, without aspiring to conquests which

^c By the slaughter of Varus and his three legions. See the first book of the Annals of Tacitus. Sueton. in August. c. 23, and Velleius Partevulus, l. ii, c. 118, &c. Augustus did not receive the melancholy news with all the temper and firmness that might have been expected from his character.

^d Tacit. Annal. l. ii. Dion. Cassius, l. Ivi, p. 833, and the speech of Augustus himself, in Julian's Caesars. It receives great light from the learned notes of his French translator, M. Spanheim.

might have proved no less fatal to himself than CHAP.
to the vanquished barbarians. I.

The only accession which the Roman empire received, during the first century of the christian æra, was the province of Britain. In this single instance, the successors of Cæsar and Augustus were persuaded to follow the example of the former, ~~rather than the precedent of the latter.~~ Conquest of Britain was the first exception to it. The proximity of its situation to the coast of Gaul seemed to invite their arms; the pleasing, though doubtful intelligence of a pearl fishery, attracted their avarice;^c and as Britain was viewed in the light of a distinct and valuable world, the conquest scarcely formed any exception to the general system of continental measures. After a war of about forty years, undertaken by the most stupid,^e maintained by the most dissolute, and terminated by the most timid of all the emperors, the far greater part of the island submitted to

^a Germanicus, Suetonius Paulinus, and Agricola, were checked and recalled in the course of their victories. Corbulo was put to death. Military merit, as it is admirably expressed by Tacitus, was in the strictest sense of the word, *imperatoria virtus*.

^b Cæsar himself conceals that ignoble motive; but it is mentioned by Suetonius, c. 47. The British pearls proved, however, of little value, on account of their dark and livid colour. Tacitus observes, with reason (in *Agricola*, c. 12), that it was an inherent defect.

“ Ego facilius crediderim, naturam margaritis deesse quam nobis
“ avaritiam.”

^c Claudio, Nero, and Domitian. A hope is expressed by Pomponius Mala, l. iii, c. 6 (he wrote under Claudio) that, by the success of the Roman arms, the island and its savage inhabitants would soon be better known. It is amusing enough to peruse such passages in the midst of London.

CHAP. I. the Roman yoke.^h The various tribes of Britons possessed valour without conduct, and the love of freedom without the spirit of union. They took up arms with savage fierceness; they laid them down, or turned them against each other, with wild inconstancy; and while they fought singly, they were successively subdued. Neither the fortitude of Caractacus, nor the despair of Boadicea, nor the fanaticism of the druids, could avert the slavery of their country, or resist the steady progress of the imperial generals, who maintained the national glory, when the throne was disgraced by the weakest, or the most vicious of mankind. At the very time when Domitian, confined to his palace, felt the terrors which he inspired; his legions, under the command of the virtuous Agricola, defeated the collected force of the Caledonians at the foot of the Grampian hills; and his fleets, venturing to explore an unknown and dangerous navigation, displayed the Roman arms round every part of the island. The conquest of Britain was considered as already achieved; and it was the design of Agricola to complete and ensure his success by the easy reduction of Ireland, for which, in his opinion, one legion and a few auxiliaries were sufficient.ⁱ The western isle might be improved into a valuable possession, and the Britons would

^h See the admirable abridgment given by Tacitus, in the Life of Agricola, and copiously, though perhaps not completely, illustrated by our own antiquarians, Camden and Horsley.

ⁱ The Irish writers, jealous of their national honour, are extremely provoked on this occasion, both with Tacitus and with Agricola.

wear their chains with the less reluctance, if the ^{CHAP.} prospect and example of freedom were on every side removed from before their eyes.

But the superior merit of Agricola soon occasioned his removal from the government of Britain; and for ever disappointed this rational, though extensive scheme of conquest. Before his departure, the prudent general had provided for ~~security~~^{the safety} of the island. He had observed, that the island is almost divided into two unequal parts by the opposite gulfs, or, as they are now called, the Friths of Scotland. Across the narrow interval of about forty miles, he had drawn a line of military posts, which was afterwards fortified in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by a turf rampart erected on foundations of stone.^{*} This wall of Antoninus, at a small distance beyond the modern cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, was fixed as the limit of the Roman province. The native Caledonians preserved in the northern extremity of the island their wild independence, for which they were not less indebted to their poverty than to their valour. Their incursions were frequently repelled and chastised; but their country was never subdued.[†] The masters of the fairest and most wealthy climates of the globe turned with contempt from

* See Horsley's *Britannia Romana*, L. i., c. 10.

† The poet Buchanan celebrates, with elegance and spirit (*see his Sylva, v.*), the unviolated independence of his native country. But if the single testimony of Richard of Cireneester was sufficient to create a Roman province of Vespasianato, the north of the wall, that independence would be reduced within very narrow limits.

CHAP. gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from
 I. lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and
 lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest
 were chased by a troop of naked barbarians.^m

Conquest
of Dacia ;
the second
exception.

Such was the state of the Roman frontiers, and such the maxims of imperial policy from the death of Augustus to the accession of Trajan. That virtuous and active prince had received the education of a soldier, and possessed the talents of a general.ⁿ The peaceful system of his predecessors was interrupted by scenes of war and conquest; and the legions, after a long interval, beheld a military emperor at their head. The first exploits of Trajan were against the Dacians, the most warlike of men, who dwelt beyond the Danube, and who, during the reign of Domitian, had insulted with impunity the majesty of Rome.^o To the strength and fierceness of barbarians, they added a contempt for life, which was derived from a warm persuasion of the immortality and transmigration of the soul.^p Decebalus, the Dacian king, approved himself a rival not unworthy of Trajan, nor did he despair of his own and the public fortune, till, by the confession of his enemies, he had exhausted every resource both of valour and policy.^q This

^m See Appian (in Proœm.), and the uniform imagery of Ossian's Poems, which, according to every hypothesis, were composed by a native Caledonian.

ⁿ See Pliny's Panegyric, which seems founded on facts.

^o Dion Cassius, l. lxvii.

^p Herodotus, l. iv. c. 94. Julian in the Cæsars, with Spanheim's observations.

^q Plin. Epist. viii, 9.

memorable war, with a very short suspension of hostilities, lasted five years; and as the emperor could exert, without control, the whole force of the state, it was terminated by an absolute submission of the Dacians.¹ The new province of Dacia, which formed a second exception to the precept of Augustus, was about thirteen hundred miles in circumference. Its natural boundaries were the Danube, the Ister, the Myscus, the Lower Danube, and the Eusine. The vestiges of a military road may still be traced from the banks of the Danube to the neighbourhood of Bender, a place famous in modern history, and Russian empires.²

Trajan was ambitious of fame; and as long as mankind shall continue to bestow more liberal applause on their destroyers than on their benefactors, the thirst of military glory will ever be the vice of the most exalted characters. The praises of Alexander, transmitted by a succession of poets and historians, had kindled a dangerous emulation in the mind of Trajan. Like him, the Roman emperor undertook an expedition against the nations of the East; but he lamented, with a sigh, that his advanced age scarcely left him any hopes of equaling the renown of the son of Philip.³ Yet the success of Trajan, however tran-

¹ Dion Cassius, l. Ixviii, p. 1122. Julian in Cæsaribus. Eusebius, viii, 2-6. Aurelius Victor in Epitome.

² Memoir of M. d'Anville, on the province of Dacia, in the *Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxviii, p. 444-468.

³ Trajan's sentiments are represented in a very just and lively manner in the *Cæsars of Julian*.

CHAP. sient, was rapid and specious. The degenerate
 Parthians, broken by intestine discord, fled before his arms. He descended the river Tigris in triumph, from the mountains of Armenia to the Persian gulf. He enjoyed the honour of being the first, as he was the last, of the Roman generals who ever navigated that remote sea. His fleets ravaged the coasts of Arabia; and Trajan vainly flattered himself that he was approaching towards the ~~extremes~~^{extremity} of India.¹ Every day the astonished senate received the intelligence of new names and new nations, that acknowledged his sway. They were informed that the kings of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhoene, and even the Parthian monarch himself, had accepted their diadems from the hands of the emperor; that the independent tribes of the Median and Carducian hills had implored his protection; and that the rich countries of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, were reduced into the state of provinces.² But the death of Trajan soon clouded the splendid prospect; and it was justly to be dreaded, that so many distant nations would throw off the unaccustomed yoke, when they were no longer restrained by the powerful hand which had imposed it.

Resigned
by his suc-
cessor Ha-
drian.

It was an ancient tradition, that when the capitol was founded by one of the Roman kings, the god Terminus (who presided over bound-

¹ Eutropius and Sextus Rufus have endeavoured to perpetuate the illusion. See a very sensible dissertation of M. Freret, in the Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxi, p. 55.

² Dion Cassius, l. lxviii; and the Abbreviators.

aries, and was represented according to the fashion of that age, by a large stone) alone, among all the inferior deities, refused to yield his place to Jupiter himself. A favourable inference was drawn from his obstinacy, which was interpreted by the augurs as a sure presage that the boundaries of the Roman power would never recede.¹ During many ages, the prediction, as it is usual, contributed to the extension of the empire. But though Terminus had resisted the majesty of Jupiter, he submitted to the authority of the emperor Hadrian.² The resignation of all the eastern conquests of Trajan was the first measure of his reign. He restored to the Parthians the election of an independent sovereign, withdrew the Roman garrisons from the provinces of Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, and in compliance with the precept of Augustus, once more established the Euphrates as the frontier of the empire.³ Censure, which arraigns the public actions and the private motives of princes, has ascribed to envy, a conduct, which might be attributed to the prudence and moderation of Hadrian. The various character of that emperor, capable, by turns, of the meanest and the most generous sentiments, may afford some colour to

¹ Ovid. Fast. I. ii, ver. 667. See Livy, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, under the reign of Tarquin.

² St. Augustin is highly delighted with the proof of the weakness of Terminus, and the vanity of the augurs. See De Civitate Dei, iv, 28.

³ See the Angustan History, p. 5. Jerome's Chronicle, and all the Epitomisers. It is somewhat surprising, that this memorable event should be omitted by Dion, or rather by Xiphilinus.

CHAP. the suspicion. It was, however, scarcely in his power to place the superiority of his predecessor in a more conspicuous light than by thus confessing himself unequal to the task of defending the conquests of Trajan.

Contrast of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. The martial and ambitious spirit of Trajan formed a very singular contrast with the moderation of his successor. The restless activity of

Hadrian was not less remarkable, when compared with the gentle repose of Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bareheaded, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire, which, in the course of his reign, was not honoured with the presence of the monarch.^b But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journeys of that amiable prince extended no further than from his palace in Rome, to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa.^c

Pacific system of Hadrian and the two Antonines.

Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system of Augustus

^b Dion, l. lxix, p. 1158. Hist. August. p. 5. S. If all our historians were lost, medals, inscriptions, and other monuments would be sufficient to record the travels of Hadrian.

^c See the Augustan History and the Epitomes.

was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by ~~CHAP.~~
Hadrian and by the two Antonines. They per-
sisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of
the empire, without attempting to enlarge its
limits. By every honourable expedient they
invited the ~~friendship~~ of the barbarians; and en-
deavoured to convince mankind, that the Roman
power, raised above the temptation of conquest,
~~was actuated only by a desire of justice and~~
justice. During a long period of forty-three years,
their virtuous labours were crowned with success;
and if we except a few slight hostilities that
served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the
reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius offer the
fair prospect of universal peace.^a The Roman
name was revered among the most remote na-
tions of the earth. The fiercest barbarians fre-
quently submitted their differences to the arbi-
tration of the emperor; and we are informed
by a contemporary historian, that he had seen
ambassadors who were refused the honour which
they came to solicit, of being admitted into the
rank of subjects.^b

The terror of the Roman arms added weight and dignity to the moderation of the emperors.

Defensive wars of
Marcus
Antoni-
nus.

^a We must, however, remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province: *Pausanias* (l. viii, c. 43), mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the generals of Pius. 1st, Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of *Atlas*. 2d, Against the brigantines of *Brftain*, who had invaded the Roman province. Both these wars (with several other hostilities) are mentioned in the *Augustan History*, p. 19.

^b Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his *History of the Roman wars*.

CHAP. They preserved peace by a constant preparation for war; and while justice regulated their conduct, they announced to the nations on their confines, that they were as little disposed to endure, as to offer an injury. The military strength, which it had been sufficient for Hadrian and the elder Antoninus to display, was exerted against the Parthians and the Germans by the emperor Marcus. The hostilities of the barbarians provoked the resentment of that philosophic monarch, and, in the prosecution of a just defence, Marcus and his generals obtained many signal victories, both on the Euphrates, and on the Danube.¹ The military establishment of the Roman empire, which thus assured either its tranquillity or its success, will now become the proper and important object of our attention.

Military
establish-
ment of
the Roman
emperors.

In the purer ages of the commonwealth, the use of arms was reserved for those ranks of citizens who had a country to love, a property to defend, and some share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest, as well as duty, to maintain. But in proportion as the public freedom was lost in extent of conquest, war was gradually improved into an art, and degraded into a trade.² The legions themselves, even at the

¹ Dion. l. lxxi, Hist. August. in Marco. The Parthian victories gave birth to a crowd of contemptible historians, whose memory has been rescued from oblivion, and exposed to ridicule, in a very lively piece of criticism of Lucian.

² The poorest rank of soldiers possessed above forty pounds sterling (Dionys. Halicarn. iv, 17), a very high qualification, at a time when money was so scarce, that an ounce of silver was equivalent

time when they were recruited in the most distant provinces, were supposed to consist of Roman citizens. That distinction was generally considered, either as a legal qualification, or as a proper recompence for the soldier; but a more serious regard was paid to the essential merit of age, strength, and military stature.⁴ In all levies, a just preference was given to the climates of the north over those of the south: the race of men born to the exercise of arms was sought for in the country rather than in cities; and it was very reasonably presumed, that the hardy occupations of smiths, carpenters, and huntsmen, would supply ~~more energy and resolution~~ than the sedentary trades which are employed in service of luxury.¹ After every qualification of property had been laid aside, the armies of the Roman emperors were still commanded, for the most part, by officers of a liberal birth and education; but the common soldiers, like the mercenary troops of modern Europe, were drawn from the meanest, and very frequently from the most profligate, of mankind.

That public virtue which, among the ancients, was denominated patriotism, is derived from a strong sense of our own interest in the preservation and prosperity of the free government of which we are members. Such a sentiment, to seventy pound weight of brass. The populace, excluded by the ancient constitution, were indiscriminately admitted by Marius. See Sallust. de Bell. Jugurth. c. 91.

² Cæsar formed his legion Alauda of Gauls and strangers; but it was during the intestine of civil war; and after the victory, he gave them the freedom of the city for their reward.

¹ See Vegetius de Re Militari, I. 5, c. 2-4.

which had rendered the legions of the republic almost invincible, could make but a very feeble impression on the mercenary servants of a despotic prince ; and it became necessary to supply that defect by other motives, of a different, but not less forcible nature ; honour and religion. The peasant, or mechanic, imbibed the useful prejudice that he was advanced to the more dignified profession of arms, in which his rank and reputation would depend on his own valour ; and that, although the prowess of a private soldier must often escape the notice of fame, his own behaviour might sometimes confer glory or disgrace on the company, the legion, or even the army, to whose honours he was associated. On his first entrance into the service, an oath was administered to him, with every circumstance of solemnity. He promised never to desert his standard, to submit his own will to the commands of his leaders, and to sacrifice his life for the safety of the emperor and the empire.^k The attachment of the Roman troops to their standards was inspired by the united influence of religion and of honour. The golden eagle, which glittered in the front of the legion, was the object of their fondest devotion ; nor was it esteemed less impious than it was ignominious to abandon that sacred ensign in the hour of danger.^l These motives, which derived their

^k The oath of service and fidelity to the emperor was annually renewed by the troops on the 25th of January.

^l Tacitus calls the Roman eagles, *Milorum Deos*. They were placed in a chapel in the camp, and with the other deities received the religious worship of the troops.

strength from the imagination, were enforced ~~char~~¹ by fears and hopes of a more substantial kind. Regular pay, occasional donatives, and a stated recompense after the appointed time of service, alleviated the hardships of the military life; whilst, on the other hand, it was impossible for cowardice or disobedience to escape the severest punishment. The centurions were authorized to punish with death; and it was an inflexible maxim of Roman discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy. From such lendable men did the valour of the imperial troops recruit their docility, unattainable by the impetuous and irregular passions of barbarians.

And yet so sensible were the Romans of the Exercises, imperfection of valour without skill and practice, that, in their language, the name of an army was borrowed from the word which signified exercise.² Military exercises were the important

¹ See Grenevius de Pecunia vetera, l. iii. p. 180. ² The emperor Domitian raised the annual stipend of the legionaries to twelve pounds of gold, which, in his time, was equivalent to about ten of our guineas. This pay, somewhat higher ~~had been~~, had been, and was afterwards, gradually increased, according to the progress of wealth and military government. After twenty years service, the veteran received three thousand denarii (about one hundred pounds sterling), or a proportionable allowance of land. The pay and advantages of the guards were, in general, about double those of the legions.

² *Exercitus ab exercitando*, Varro de Lingua Latina, l. iv. Cicero in Tusculan. l. ii, 37. There is room for a very interesting work, which should lay open the connection between the languages and manners of nations.

CHAP. and unremitting object of their discipline. The recruits and young soldiers were constantly trained both in the morning and in the evening, nor was age or knowledge allowed to excuse the veterans from the daily repetition of what they had completely learnt. Large sheds were erected in the winter-quarters of the troops, that their useful labours might not receive any interruption from the most tempestuous weather; and it was carefully observed, that the arms destined to this imitation of war, should be of double the weight which was required in real action.* It is not the purpose of this work to enter into any minute description of the Roman exercises. We shall only remark, that they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions. The soldiers were diligently instructed to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry heavy burdens, to handle every species of arms that was used either for offence or for defence, either in distant engagement, or in a closer onset; to form a variety of evolutions; and to move to the sound of flutes, in the Pyrrhic or martial dance.^p In the midst of peace, the Roman troops familiarized themselves with the practice of war; and it is prettily remarked by an ancient historian who had fought against them, that the effusion of blood was the

* Vegetius, l. ii, and the rest of his first book.

^p The Pyrrhic dance is extremely well illustrated by M. le Beau, in the *Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxxv, p. 262, &c. learned academician, in a series of memoirs, has collected all the pages of the ancients that relate to the Roman legion.

only circumstance which distinguished a field of battle from a field of exercise.⁴ It was the policy of the ablest generals, and even of the emperors themselves, to encourage these military studies by their presence and example; and we are informed that Hadrian, as well as Trajan, frequently condescended to instruct the unexperienced soldiers, to reward the diligent, and ~~and to discipline them by the principle of~~¹ superior strength or dexterity.⁵ Under the reigns of those princes, the science of tactics was cultivated with success; and as long as the empire retained any vigour, their military instructions were respected as the most perfect model of Roman discipline.

Nine centuries of war had gradually introduced into the service many alterations and improvements. The legions, as they are described by Polybius;⁶ in the time of the Punic wars, differed very materially from those which achieved the victories of Cæsar, or defended the monarchy of Hadrian and the Antonines. The constitution of the imperial legion may be described in a few words.⁷ The heavy-armed in-

⁴ Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. iii, c. 5. We are indebted to this Jew for some very curious details of Roman discipline.

⁵ Plin. Panegyr. c. 13, Life of Hadrian, in the Augustine History.

⁶ See an admirable digression on the Roman discipline, in the sixth book of his history.

⁷ Vegetius de Re Militari, l. ii, c. 4, &c. Considerable part of his very perplexed abridgment was taken from the regulations of Trajan and Hadrian; and the legion, as he describes it, "cannot suit any other age of the Roman empire."

CHAR. I. which composed its principal strength, was divided into ten cohorts, and fifty-five companies, under the orders of a correspondent number of tribunes and centurions. The first cohort, which always claimed the post of honour and the custody of the eagle, was formed of eleven hundred and five soldiers, the most approved for valour and fidelity. The remaining nine cohorts consisted each of five hundred and fifty-five ; and the whole army amounted to thirteen thousand men. Their arms were uniform, and admirably adapted to the nature of their service : an open helmet, with a lofty crest ; a breast-plate, or coat of mail ; greaves on their legs, and an ample buckler on their left arm. The buckler was of an oblong and concave figure, four feet in length, and two and a half in breadth; framed of a light wood, covered with a bull's hide, and strongly guarded with plates of brass. Besides a lighter spear, the legionary soldier grasped in his right hand the formidable *pilum*, a ponderous javelin, whose utmost length was about six feet, and which was terminated by a massy triangular point of steel of eighteen inches. This instrument was indeed much inferior to our modern fire-

* Vegetius de Re Militari, I. ii, c. 1. In the pupillage of Caesar and Cicero, the word *miles* was almost confined to the infantry. Under the lower empire, and in the times of chivalry, it was appropriated almost ~~as~~ exclusively to the men of arms, who fought on horseback.

* In the time of Polybius and Demosthenes of Halicarnassus (c. 45), the steel point of the pilum seems to have been much longer. In the time of Vegetius, it was reduced to a foot, or even nine inches. I have chosen a medium.

arms ; since it was exhausted by a single discharge, at the distance of only ten or twelve paces. Yet when it was launched by a firm and skilful hand, there was not any cavalry that durst venture within its reach, nor any shield or corslet that could sustain the impetuosity of its weight. As soon as the Roman had darted his *pilum*, he drew his sword, and rushed forwards, to close

tempered Spanish blade, that carried a double edge, and was alike suited to the purpose of striking or of pushing ; but the soldier was always instructed to prefer the latter use of it, as his own body

he inflicted a more dangerous wound on his adversary.¹ The legion was usually drawn up eight deep; and the regular distance of three feet was left between the files as well as ranks.² A body of troops habituated to preserve this open order, in a long front and a rapid charge, found themselves prepared to execute every disposition which the circumstances of war, or the skill of their leader, might suggest. The soldiers possessed a free space for his arms and motions, and sufficient intervals were allowed, through which seasonable reinforcements might be introduced to the relief of the exhausted combatants.³ The tactics of the Greeks and Ma-

¹ For the legionary arms, see *Lipius de Militia Romana*, I. iii, c. 2. &c.

² See the beautiful comparison of Virgil, *Georgic.* ii. v. 279.

³ M. Chéhard, *Mémoires Militaires*, tom. i, c. 4, and *Nouveaux Mémoires*, tom. i, p. 293-311, has treated the subject like a scholar and an officer.

CHAP. cedarians were formed on very different principles.
I. The strength of the phalanx depended on sixteen ranks of long pikes, wedged together in the closest array.^b But it was soon discovered by reflection, as well as by the event, that the strength of the phalanx was unable to contend with the activity of the legion.^c

Cavalry.

The cavalry, without which the force of the legion would have remained imperfect, was divided into ten ~~tropae~~ or ~~equites~~, the first, as the companion of the first cohort, consisted of an hundred and thirty-two men; whilst each of the other nine amounted only to sixty-six. The entire establishment formed a regiment, if we may use the modern expression, of seven hundred and twenty-six horse, naturally connected with its respective legion, but occasionally separated to act in the line, and to compose a part of the wings of the army.^d The cavalry of the emperors was no longer composed, like that of the ancient republic, of the noblest youths of Rome and Italy, who, by performing their military service on horseback, prepared themselves for the offices of senator and consul; and solicited, by deeds of valour, the future suffrages of their countrymen.^e Since the alteration of manners

^b See Arrian's Tactics. With the true partiality of a Greek, Arrian rather chose to describe the phalanx, of which he had read, than the legions which he had commanded.

^c Polyb. b. xvii.

^d Veget. de Re Militari, I. ii, c. 6. His positive testimony, which might be supported by circumstantial evidence, ought surely to silence those critics who reduce the imperial legion its proper body of cavalry.

^e See Livy almost throughout, particularly xlvi, 61.

and government, the most wealthy of the equestrian order were engaged in the administration of justice, and of the revenue; and whenever they embraced the profession of arms, they were immediately entrusted with a troop of horse, or a cohort of foot.^c Trajan and Hadrian formed their cavalry from the same provinces, and the same class of their subjects, which recruited the ranks of the legions. The legions were drawn for the most part, in Spain or Cappadocia. The Roman troopers despised the complete armour with which the cavalry of the East was encumbered. Their more useful arms consisted in a helmet, an oblong shield, light boots, and a coat of mail. A javelin, and a long broad-sword, were their principal weapons of offence. The use of lances, and of iron maces, they seem to have borrowed from the barbarians.^d

The safety and honour of the empire were principally entrusted to the legions; but the policy of Rome condescended to adopt every useful instrument of war. Considerable levies were regularly made among the provincials, who had not yet deserved the honourable distinction of Romans. Many dependent princes and communities dispersed round the frontiers, were permitted, for a while, to hold their freedom and security by the

^c Plin. Hist. Natur. xxxiii, 2. The true sense of that very curious passage was first discovered and illustrated by M. de Beaufort, République Romaine, I. ii, c. 2.

^d As in the instance of Horace and Agricola. This appears to have been a defect in the Roman discipline, which Hadrian endeavoured to remedy, by ascertaining the legal age of a tribune.

^e See Arrian's Tactics.

CHAP. terms of military service.¹ Even select troops of hostile barbarians were frequently compelled or persuaded to consume their dangerous valour in remote climates, and for the benefit of the state.² All these were included under the general name of auxiliaries; and howsoever they might vary according to the difference of times and circumstances, their numbers were seldom much inferior to those of the legions themselves.³ Among the auxiliaries, the bravest and most faithful bands were placed under the command of prefects and centurions, and severely trained in the arts of Roman discipline; but the far greater part retained those arms, to which the nature of their country, or their early habits of life, were peculiarly adapted them. By this institution, each legion, to whom a certain proportion of auxiliaries was allotted, contained within itself every species of lighter troops, and of missile weapons; and was capable of encountering every nation, with the advantages of its respective arms and discipline.⁴ Nor was the legion destitute of what, in modern language, would be styled a train of artillery. It consisted in ten military engines of the largest, and fifty-five of

Artillery.

¹ Such, in particular, was the state of the Batavians. Tacit. Germania, c. 35.

² Marcus Antoninus obliged the vanquished Quadi and Marcomanni to supply him with a large body of troops, which he immediately sent into Britain. Dion Cassius, l. lxxv.

³ Tacit. Annal. iv, 5. Those who fix a regular proportion of as many foot, and twice as many horse, confound the auxiliaries of the emperors with the regular army of the republic.

⁴ Vegetus, ii, 8. Aelian, in his order of march and battle against the Alani.

a smaller size; but all of which, either in an oblique or horizontal manner, discharged stones and darts with irresistible violence.^L

The camp of a Roman legion presented the appearance of a fortified city.^M And so much space was reserved out, the pioneers carefully

levelled the ground, and removed every impediment that might interrupt its perfect regularity.^L

It is difficult to calculate, that a square of about seven hundred yards was sufficient for the encampment of twenty thousand Romans; though a similar number of our own troops would extend to three miles in front of their rampart.

midst of the camp, the praetorium, or general's quarters, rose above the others; the cavalry, the infantry, and the auxiliaries, occupied their respective stations; the streets were broad, and perfectly straight, and a vacant space of two hundred feet was left on all sides, between the tents and the rampart. The rampart itself was usually twelve feet high, armed with a line of

^N The subject of the ancient machines is treated with great knowledge and ingenuity by the chevalier Folard (Polybe, tom. II, p. 233—290). His invention, in many respects, is equal to our modern cannon and mortars. We may observe, that the use of them in the field gradually became more prevalent, in proportion as personal valour and military skill declined with the Roman empire. When men were no longer found, their place was supplied by machines. See Vegetius, ii, 25, Arrian.

* Vegetius finishes his second book, and the description of the legion, with the following emphatic words: " Universa ergo in genere necessaria esse creditur, secundum quod debet ubi portare, ut in quovis loco fixerit castra, argutam faciat civitatem."

Encamp-
ment.

CHAP. strong and intricate palisades, and defended by a ditch of twelve feet in depth as well as in breadth. This important labour was performed by the hands of the legionaries themselves; to whom the use of the spade and the pick-axe was no less familiar than that of the sword or *pilum*. Active valour may often be the present of nature; but such patient diligence can be the fruit only of habit and discipline.⁸

March.

Whenever the trumpet gave the signal of departure, the camp was almost instantaneously broke up, and the troops fell into their ranks without delay or confusion. Besides their arms, which the legionaries scarcely considered as an incumbrance, they were laden with their kitchen furniture, the instruments of fortification, and the provision of many days.⁹ Under this weight, which would oppress the delicacy of a modern soldier, they were trained by a regular step to advance, in about six hours, near twenty miles.¹⁰ On the appearance of an enemy, they threw aside their baggage, and by easy and rapid evolutions converted the column of march into an order of battle.¹¹ The slingers and archers skirmished in the front; the auxiliaries formed the first line, and were seconded or sustained by the strength of the

⁸ For the Roman Castrenimation, see Polybius, l. vi. with Lipsius de Militi Romana, Joseph de Bell. Jud. l. iii. c. 5. Vegetius i, 21-25; iii, 9; and Mémoires de Guichard, tom. i, c. 1.

⁹ Cicero in Tusculan. ii, 37. Joseph de Bell. Jud. l. iii, 5. Frontinus, iv, 1.

¹⁰ Vegetius, i, 9. See Mémoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xxv, p. 187.

¹¹ See those evolutions admirably well explained by M. Guichard, Nouveaux Mémoires, tom. i, p. 141-234.

legions ; the cavalry covered the flanks, and the military engines were placed in the rear.

Such were the arts of war, by which the Roman emperors defended their extensive conquests, and preserved a military spirit, at a time when every other state was oppressed by luxury and despotism.

Number
and dispo-
sition of
the legions.
I.

If, in the consideration of their armies, we pass from their discipline to their number, we shall find them, with

any tolerable accuracy. We may compute, however,

that the legion, which was itself a body of six thousand eight hundred and thirty-one Romans,

might, with its attendant auxiliaries, amount to

about twelve thousand five hundred men. The

peace establishment of Hadrian and his successors

was composed of no less than thirty of these

formidable brigades ; and most probably formed

a standing force of three hundred and seventy-five

thousand men. Instead of being confined within

the walls of fortified cities, which the Romans

considered as the refuge of weakness or pusillani-

mity, the legions were encamped on the banks of

the great rivers, and along the frontiers of the

barbarians. As their stations, for the most part,

remained fixed and permanent, we may venture

to describe the distribution of the troops. Three

legions were sufficient for Britain. The principal

strength lay upon the Rhine and Danube, and

consisted of sixteen legions, in the following pro-

portions ; two in the Lower, and three in the

Upper Germany ; one in Rhætia, one in Nori-

cum, four in Pannonia, three in Mæsia, and two

in Dacia. The defence of the Euphrates was

CHAP. exhausted to eight legions, six of whom were planted in Syria, and the other two in Cappadocia. With regard to Egypt, Africa, and Spain, as they were far removed from any important scene of war, a single legion maintained the domestic tranquillity of each of those great provinces. Even Italy was not left destitute of a military force. Above twenty thousand chosen soldiers, distinguished by the titles of city cohorts, ~~and praetorian guards~~, watched over the safety of the metropolis and the capital. As the authors of almost every revolution that distracted the empire, the prætorians will, very soon, and very loudly, demand our attention; ~~but in their arms and institutions~~ we cannot find any circumstance which discriminated them from the legions, unless it were a more splendid appearance, and a less rigid discipline.

Navy.

The navy maintained by the emperors might seem inadequate to their greatness; but it was fully sufficient for every useful purpose of government. The ambition of the Romans was confined to the land; nor was that warlike people ever actuated by the enterprising spirit which had prompted the navigators of Tyre, of Carthage, and even of Marseilles, to enlarge the bounds of the world, and to explore the most remote coasts of the ocean. To the Romans the ocean remained

* Tacitus (Annal. ix.) has given us a state of the legions under Tiberius; and Dion Cassius (l. v., p. 794) under Alexander Severus. I have endeavoured to fix on the proper medium between these two periods. See likewise Lipsius de Magnitudine Romanorum, l. i., c. 4, 5.

an object of terror rather than of curiosity,^{*} the whole extent of the Mediterranean, after the destruction of Carthage, and the extirpation of the pirates, was included within their provinces. The policy of the emperors was directed only to preserve the peaceful dominion of that sea, and to protect the commerce of their subjects. With these moderate views, Augustus stationed two

ports of Italy, the one at Ravenna, on the Adriatic; the other at Misenum, in the bay of Naples. Experience seems at length to have convinced the ancients, that as soon as their galleys exceeded two, or at the most three, they were no longer suited rather for vain pomp than for real service. Augustus himself, in the victory of Actium, had seen the superiority of his own light frigates (they were called liburnians) over the lofty but unwieldy castles of his rival.[†] Of these liburnians he composed the two fleets of Ravenna and Misenum, destined to command, the one the eastern, the other the western division of the Mediterranean; and to each of them he committed a body of several thousand marines. Besides these two ports, which may be considered as the principal seats of the Roman navy, a very considerable force was stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and the Euxine was guarded

* The Romans tried to disguise, by the pretence of religious awe, their strength and terror. See Tacit. Germania, c. 34.

† Plin. lib. 33. Mare. Anton. And yet, if we may credit Orosius, these enormous castles were no more than ten feet above the water, vi, 19.

CHAP. by forty ships, and three thousand soldiers. To all these we add the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a great number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube, to harass the country, or to intercept the passage of the barbarians.¹ If we review this general state of the imperial forces; of the cavalry as well as infantry; of the legions, the auxiliaries, the guards, and the navy; the most liberal computation will allow us Amount of to fix the entire establishment by sea and by land the whole establish-
ment. at more than four hundred and fifty thousand men; a military power, which, however formidable it may seem, was equalled by a monarch of the last century, whose kingdom was confined within a single province of the Roman empire.

View of the provinces of the Roman empire. We have attempted to explain the spirit which moderated, and the strength which supported, the power of Hadrian and the Antonines. We shall now endeavour, with clearness and precision, to describe the provinces once united under their sway, but at present divided into so many independent and hostile states.

Spain. Spain, the western extremity of the empire of Europe, and of the ancient world, has, in every age, invariably preserved the same natural limits; the Pyrenean mountains, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic ocean. That great peninsula, at present so unequally divided be-

¹ See Lipsius, *de Magnitud. Rom.* v. i. c. 5. The sixteen last chapters of Vegetius relate to naval affairs.

² Voltaire, *Siecle de Louis XIV.* c. 29. It must, however, be remembered, that France still feels that extraordinary effort.

tween two sovereigns, was distributed by Augustus into three provinces, Lusitania, Bætica, and Tarraconensis.¹ The kingdom of Portugal now fills the place of the warlike country of the Lusitanians; and ~~the less~~ sustained by the former, on the side of the east, is compensated by an accession of territory towards the north. The confines of Grenada and Andalusia correspond with those of the Roman provinces of the south of Spain, Gallicia, and the Asturias, Biscay and Navarre, Leon, and the two Castiles, Murcia, Valencia, Catalonia, and Arragon, all contributed to form the third and most considerable of the Roman governments, which, from the name of its capital, was styled the province of Tarragona.^a Of the native barbarians, the Celtiberians were the most powerful, as the Cantabrians and Asturians proved the most obstinate. Confident in the strength of their mountains, they were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs..

Ancient Gaul, as it contained the whole country between the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rhine, and the ocean, was of greater extent than modern France. To the dominions of that powerful monarchy, with its recent acquisitions of Alsace and Lorraine, we must add the duchy of

^a See Strabo, l. ii. It is natural enough to suppose that Arragon is derived from Tarraconensis; and several moderns who have written in Latin, use those words as synonymous. It is, however, certain, that the Arragon, a little stream which falls from the Pyrenees into the Ebro, first gave its name to a country, and gradually to a kingdom. See d'Anville, *Geographie du Moyen Age*, p. 181.

CHAP. CXVII. the cantons of Switzerland, the four electorates of the Rhine, and the territories of Liege, Luxembourg, Hainault, Flanders, and Brabant.

When Augustus gave laws to the conquests of his father, he introduced a division of Gaul, equally adapted to the progress of the legions, to the course of the rivers, and to the principal national distinctions, which had comprehended above an hundred independent states.^b The sea-coast of the Mediterranean, the Provinces, and Depar-

^c tures, received their provincial appellation from the colony of Narbonne. The government of Aquitaine was extended from the Pyrenees to the Loire. The country between the Loire and the Seine was styled the Celtic Gaul, and soon borrowed a new denomination from the celebrated colony of Lugdunum, or Lyons. The Belgic lay beyond the Seine, and in more ancient times had been bounded only by the Rhine; but a little before the age of Caesar, the Germans, abusing their superiority of valour, had occupied a considerable portion of the Belgic territory. The Roman conquerors very eagerly embraced so flattering a circumstance, and the Gallic frontier of the Rhine, from Bonna to the sea, received the pompous names of the Upper and the Lower Germany. Such, under the reign of the Antonines, were the

^b One hundred and fifteen cities appear in the *Notitia of Gaul*, and it is well known that this appellation was applied not to the capital town, but to the whole metropolis of each state. Tarech and Appian indicate the number of tribes to three or four hundred.

^c D'Anville. *Notice de l'Ancienne Gaul.*

provinces of Gaul; the Narbonnese, Aquitaine, CHAP.
the Celtic, or Lyonnese, the Belgic, and the two ^{I.}
Germanys.

We have already had occasion to mention the Britain. conquest of Britain, and to fix the boundary of the Roman province in this island. It comprehended all England, Wales, and the lowlands of Scotland, as far as the friths of Dunbarton and Edinburgh. Before Britain lost her freedom, the country was irregularly divided between thirty tribes of barbarians, of whom the most considerable were the Belgæ in the west, the Brigantes in the north, the Silures in South Wales, and the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk. As far as we can either trace or credit the resemblance of manners and language, Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages. Before they yielded to the Roman arms, they often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest. After their submission, they constituted the western division of the European provinces, which extended from the columns of Hercules to the wall of Antoninus, and from the mouth of the Tigris to the sources of the Rhine and Danube.

Before the Roman conquest, the country which Italy. is now called Lombardy was not considered as a part of Italy. It had been occupied by a powerful colony of Gauls, who, settling themselves along the banks of the Po, from Piedmont to Romagna, carried their arms and diffused their name from the Alps to the Appenine. The

* Whitaker's History of Manchester, vol. i, c. 8.

CHAP. Ligurians dwelt on the rocky coast, which now forms the republic of Genoa. Venice was yet unborn : but the territories of that state which lie to the east of the Adige, were inhabited by the Venetians.^e The middle part of the peninsula that now composes the duchy of Tuscany and the ecclesiastical state, was the ancient seat of the Etruscans and Umbrians ; to the former of whom Italy was indebted for the first rudiments of civilization. This country, which rolled at the foot of the seven hills of Rome, and the country of the Sabines, the Latins, and the Volsci, from that river to the frontiers of Naples, was the theatre of her infant victories. On that celebrated ground the first consuls deserved triumphs, their successors adorned villas, and their posterity have erected convents.^f Capua and Campania possessed the immediate territory of Naples; and therest of the kingdom was inhabited by many warlike nations, the Marsi, the Samnites, the Apulians, and the Lucanians; and the sea-coasts had been covered by the flourishing colonies of the Greeks. — We may remark, that when Augustus divided Italy into eleven regions, the little province of Istria was annexed to the seat of Roman sovereignty.^g

^e The Italian Veneti, though often confounded with the Gauls, were more probably of Illyrian origin. See M. Freret, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xviii.

^f See Maffei Verona illustrata, l. i.

^g The first contract was observed by the ancients. See Florid i, 11. The second must strike every modern traveler.

^h Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. iii) follows the division of Italy by Augustus.

The European provinces of Rome were protected by the course of the Rhine and the Danube. The latter of those mighty streams, which rises at the distance of only thirty miles from the former, flows ~~about~~¹ thirteen hundred miles, for the most part to the south east, collects the tribute of sixty navigable rivers, and is at length, through six mouths, received into the Euxine, which appears to be the common receptacle of all the waters.¹ The provinces of the Danube soon acquired the general appellation of Illyricum, or the Illyrian frontier; and were esteemed the most warlike of the empire; but they deserve to be more particularly considered under the names of Rhætia, Noricum, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Dacia, Mesia, Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece.

The province of Rhætia, which soon extinguished the name of the Vindelicians, extended from the summit of the Alps to the banks of the Danube; from its source, as far as its conflux with the Inn. The greatest part of the flat country is subject to the elector of Bavaria; the city of Augsburg is protected by the constitution of the German empire; the Grisons are safe in their mountains; and the country of Tyrol is ranked among the numerous provinces of the house of Austria.

The wide extent of territory which is included between the Inn, the Danube, and the Save; ^{Noricum and Pan-} _{nonia.}

¹ Tournefort, *Voyages en Grèce et Asia Mineure*, lettre xviii.

The name of Illyricum originally belonged to the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and was gradually extended by the Romans from the Alps to the Euxine sea. See Serverini *Pannonia*, l. i, c. 3.

CHAP. Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Lower Hungary, and Sclavonia, was known to the ancients under the names of Noricum and Pannonia. In their original state of independence, their fierce inhabitants were intimately connected. Under the Roman government they were frequently united, and they still remain the patrimony of a single family. They now contain the residence of a German prince, who styles himself emperor of the Romans, and form the centre, as well as strength, of the Austrian power. It may not be improper to observe, that if we except Bohemia, Moravia, the northern skirts of Austria, and a part of Hungary between the Teyss and the Danube, all the other dominions of the house of Austria were comprised within the limits of the Roman empire.

Dalmatia.

Dalmatia, to which the name of Illyricum more properly belonged, was a long but narrow tract, between the Save and the Adriatic. The best part of the sea-coast, which still retains its ancient appellation, is a province of the Venetian state, and the seat of the little republic of Ragusa. The inland parts have assumed the Sclavonian names of Croatia and Bosnia; the former obeys an Austrian governor, the latter a Turkish pasha; but the whole country is still infested by tribes of barbarians, whose savage independence irregularly marks the doubtful limit of the christian and mahometan power.¹

¹ A Venetian traveller, the Abbé Fortis, has lately given us some account of those very obscure countries. But the geography and antiquities of the western Illyricum can be expected only from the munificence of the emperor, its sovereign.

After the Danube had received the waters of CHAP.
 the Teyss and the Save, it acquired, at least I,
 among the Greeks, the name of Ister.^m It for-
 merly divided Mæsia and Dacia, the latter of
 which, as we have already seen, was a conquest
 of Trajan, and the only province beyond the
 river. If we inquire into the present state of
 those countries, we shall find that, on the left
~~head of the Danube, Transylvania, and Transylvania~~
 have been annexed, after many revolutions, to
 the crown of Hungary; whilst the principalities
 of Moldavia and Walachia acknowledge the
 supremacy of the Ottoman Porte. On the right
 hand of the Danube, Mæsia, which, during the
 middle ages, was broken into the barbarian king-
 doms of Servia and Bulgaria, is again united in
 Turkish slavery.

The appellation of Roumelia, which is still Thrace,
 bestowed by the Turks on the extensive countries Macedonia,
 of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, preserves the
 memory of their ancient state under the Roman
 empire. In the time of the Antonines, the martial regions of Thrace, from the mountains of
~~Hæmus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the~~
~~Hæmus and Rhodope, to the Bosphorus and the~~
 Hellespont, had assumed the form of a province.
 Notwithstanding the change of masters and of
 religion, the new city of Rome, founded by
 Constantine on the banks of the Bosphorus, has
 ever since remained the capital of a great
 monarchy. The kingdom of Macedonia, which,

^m The Save rises near the confines of Istria, and was considered by the more early Greeks as the principal stream of the Danube.

CHAP. under the reign of Alexander, gave laws to Asia.
I. derived more solid advantages from the policy
of the two Philips: and, with its dependencies of
Epirus and Thessaly, extended from the Aegean
to the Ionian sea. When we reflect on the fame
of Thebes and Argos, of Sparta and Athens, we
can scarcely persuade ourselves, that so many
immortal republics of ancient Greece were lost in
a single province of the Roman empire, which,
from the superior influence of the Achaean league,
was usually denominated the province of Achaia.

Asia Mi-
nor.

Such was the state of Europe under the Roman emperors. The provinces of Asia, without excepting the transient conquests of Trajan, are all comprehended within the limits of the Turkish power. But, instead of following the arbitrary divisions of despotism and ignorance, it will be safer for us, as well as more agreeable, to observe the indelible characters of nature. The name of Asia Minor is attributed, with some propriety, to the peninsula, which, confined betwixt the Euxine and the Mediterranean, advances from the Euphrates towards Europe. The most extensive and flourishing district, westward of mount Taurus and the river Halys, was dignified by the Romans with the exclusive title of Asia. The jurisdiction of that province extended over the ancient monarchies of Troy, Lydia, and Phrygia, the maritime countries of the Pamphylians, Lycians, and Carians, and the Grecian colonies of Ionia, which equalled in arts, though not in arms, the glory of their parent. The kingdoms of Bithynia and Pontus possessed the northern

side of the peninsula from Constantinople to Trebizond. On the opposite side, the province of Cilicia was terminated by the mountains of Syria : the inland country, separated from the Roman Asia by the river Halys, and from Armenia by the Euphrates, had once formed the independent kingdom of Cappadocia. In this place we may observe, that the northern shores of the Black sea, beyond Trebizond in Asia, and beyond the Danube in Europe, acknowledged the sovereignty of the emperors, and received at their hands either tributary princes or Roman garrisons. Budzak, Crim Tartary, Circassia, and Mingrelia, are the modern appellations of those savage countries.*

Under the successors of Alexander, Syria ^{Syria,}
was the seat of the Seleucidæ, who reigned over ^{Phœnicia,}
Upper Asia, till the successful revolt of the Par-^{and Pales-}
thians confined their dominions between the
Euphrates and the Mediterranean. When Syria
became subject to the Romans, it formed the
eastern frontier of their empire; nor did that
province, in its utmost latitude, know any other
bounds than the mountains of Cappadocia to the
north, and towards the south, the confines of
Egypt, and the Red sea. Phœnicia and Pales-
tine were sometimes annexed to, and sometimes
separated from, the jurisdiction of Syria. The
former of these was a narrow and rocky coast;
the latter was a territory scarcely superior to

* See the *Piriplus* of Arrian. He examined the coasts of the Euxine, when he was governor of Cappadocia.

CHAP. Wales, either in fertility or extent. Yet Phœnicia and Palestine will for ever live in the memory of mankind, since America, as well as Europe, has received letters from the one, and religion from the other.^o A sandy desert, alike destitute of wood and water, skirts along the doubtful confine of Syria, from the Euphrates to the Red sea. The wandering life of the Arabs was inseparably connected with their independence; and wherever, on some spots less barren than the rest, they ventured to fix any settled habitation, they soon became subjects to the Roman empire.^p

Egypt.

The geographers of antiquity have frequently hesitated to what portion of the globe they should ascribe Egypt.^q By its situation, that celebrated kingdom is included within the immense peninsula of Africa; but it is accessible only on the side of Asia, whose revolutions, in almost every period of history, Egypt has humbly obeyed. A Roman praefect was seated on the splendid throne of the Ptolemys; and the iron sceptre of the

^o The progress of religion is well known. The use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about fifteen hundred years before Christ; and the Europeans carried them to America about fifteen centuries after the Christian era. But in a period three thousand years, the Phœnician alphabet received considerable alterations, as it passed through the hands of the Greeks and Romans.

^p Dion Cassius, lib. xviii, p. 1131.

^q Ptolemy and Strabo, with the modern geographers, fix the isthmus of Suez as the boundary of Asia and Africa. Dionysius Mela, Pliny, Sallust, Hirtius, and Solinus, have preferred for the purpose the western branch of the Nile, or even the great Cataracts, or descent, which last would assign to Asia, not only Egypt, but part of Libya.

Mamelukes is now in the hands of a Turkish CHAP.
pasha. The Nile flows down the country above
five hundred miles, from the tropic of Cancer to
the Mediterranean, and marks, on either side, the
extent of fertility by the measure of its inundations. Cyrene, ~~situate~~ towards the west, and along
the sea-coast, was first a Greek colony, afterwards
a province of Egypt, and is now lost in the de-
sert.

From Cyrene to the ocean, the coast of Africa, ~~Africa~~, extends above fifteen hundred miles; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Sahara, or sandy desert, that its breadth seldom exceeds four or five miles. The eastern division was considered by the Romans as the more peculiar and proper province of Africa. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind. Under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage, it became the centre of commerce and empire; but the republic of Carthage is now degenerated into the feeble and disorded states of Tripoli and Tunis. The military government of Algiers oppresses the wide extent of Numidia, as it was once united under Massinissa and Jugurtha: but in the time of Augustus, the limits of Numidia were contracted; and, at least, two thirds of the country acquiesced in the name of Mauritania, with the epithet of Cæsariensis. The genuine Mauritania, or country of the Moors, which, from the ancient city of Tingi, ~~Tangier~~,

CAP. was distinguished by the appellation of Tin-mana, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez. Sallè, on the ocean, so infamous at present for its piratical depredations, was noticed by the Romans, as the extreme object of their power, and almost of their geography. A city of their foundation may still be discovered near Mequinez, the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the emperor of Morocco; but it does not appear that his more southern dominions, called Segel-messa, were ever comprehended within the Roman province. The western parts of Africa are intersected by the branches of mount Atlas, a name so idly celebrated by the fancy of poets, but which is now diffused over the immense ocean that rolls between the ancient and the new continent.*

The Mediterranean,
with its
islands.

Having now finished the circuit of the Roman empire, we may observe that Africa is divided from Spain by a narrow strait of about twelve miles, through which the Atlantic flows into the Mediterranean. The columns of Hercules, famous among the ancients, were two mountains

of moderate height, and gentle declivity of mount Atlas (see Shaw's Travels, p. 5) are very unlike a solitary mountain which rears its head into the clouds, and seems to support the heavens. The peak of Teneriffe, on the contrary, rises a league and half above the surface of the sea, and as it was frequently visited by the Phoenicians, might engage the notice of the Greek poets. Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. i, p. 314. Histoire des Voyages, tom. ii.

* M. de la Rochejaud, vol. xii, p. 207, unsupported by either fact or probability, has generously bestowed the Canary islands on the Roman empire.

which seemed to have been torn asunder by some ~~CHAP.~~^{1.} convulsion of the elements; and at the foot of the European mountain, the fortress of Gibraltar is now seated. The whole extent of the Mediterranean sea, its coasts, and its islands, were comprised within the Roman dominion. Of the larger islands, the two Baleares, which derive their name of Majorca and Minorca from their

to Spain, the latter to Great Britain. It is easier to deplore the fate, than to describe the actual condition of Corsica. Two Italian sovereigns assume a regal title from Sardinia and Sicily. Crete, or Candia, with Cyprus, and most of the smaller islands of Greece and Asia, have been subdued by the Turkish arms, whilst the little rock of Malta defies their power, and has emerged, under the government of its military order, into fame and opulence.

This long enumeration of provinces, whose broken fragments have formed so many powerful kingdoms, might almost induce us to forgive the vanity or ignorance of the ancient. Dazzled with the extensive sway, the irresistible strength, and the real or affected moderation of the emperors, they permitted themselves to despise, and sometimes to forget, the outlying countries, which had been left in the enjoyment of a barbarous independence; and they gradually usurped the licence of confounding the Roman monarchy with the globe of the earth.^t But the

^t Bergier, Hist. des Grands Chemins, I. iii, c. 1, 2, 3, 4; a very useful collection.

CHAP. temper, as well as knowledge, of a modern historian require a more sober and accurate language.

He may impress a juster image of the greatness of Rome, by observing that the empire was above two thousand miles in breadth, from the wall of Antoninus and the northern limits of Dacia, to mount Atlas and the tropic of Cancer ; that it extended, in length, more than three thousand miles, from the western ocean to the Euphrates ; that it was situated in the ~~southern~~ ^{temperate} zone, between the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth degrees of northern latitude ; and that it was ~~supposed~~ ^{supposed} to contain above sixteen hundred thousand square miles, for the most part of fertile and cultivated land.*

* See Templeman's Survey of the Globe ; but I distrust both the doctor's learning and his maps.

CHAP. II.

Of the union and internal prosperity of the Roman empire, in the age of the Antonines.

IT is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest, that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe.^{Principles of government.} In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis. Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany.^a But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws, and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

^a They were erected about the midway between Lahor and Delhi. The conquests of Alexander in Hindostan were confined to the Punjab, a country watered by the five great streams of the Indus.

^b See M. de Guignes, *Histoires des Huns*, I. xv, xvi, and xvii.

CHAP.

II.

Universal
spirit of
toleration.

The policy of the emperors and the senate, so far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world, were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

Of the
people.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour, nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith, the different religions of earth.¹ Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not discordant, materials. As soon as it was known that sages and heroes, who had

¹ There is not any writer who describes, in so lively a manner, Herodotus, the true genius of polytheism. The best commentary may be found in Mr. Hume's Natural History of Religion; and the best contrast in Bossuet's Universal History. Some obscure traces of an intolerant spirit appear in the conduct of the Egyptians (see Juvenal, sat. xv); and the christians, as well as Jews, who lived under the Roman empire, formed a very important exception; so important indeed, that the discussion will require a distinct chapter of this work.

who had died for the benefit of their country, CHAP.
 were exalted to a state of power and immortality,
 it was universally confessed, that they deserved,
 if not the adoration, at least the reverence, of
 all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves
 and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their
 local and respective influence; nor could the
 Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber,
 dare to invoke the aid of the Nile. The vis-
 ible powers of nature, the planets, and the ele-
 ments, were the same throughout the universe.
 The invisible governors of the moral world were
 inevitably cast in a similar mould, by reason and
 allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquir-
 ed its divine representative; every art and pro-
 fession its patron, whose attributes, in the most
 distant ages and countries, were uniformly de-
 rived from the character of their peculiar vota-
 ries. A republic of gods of such opposite tem-
 pers and interest required, in every system, the
 moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who,
 by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was
 gradually invested with the sublime perfections of
 an eternal parent, and an omnipotent monarch.^a
 Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the
 nations were less attentive to the difference, than
 to the resemblance of their religious worship.
 The Greek, the Roman, and the barbarian, as

^a The rights, powers, and pretensions of the sovereign of Olympus are very clearly described in the fifteenth book of the Iliad; in the Greek original, I mean; for Mr. Pope, without perceiving it, has im-
 proved the theology of Homer.

CHAP. they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almost a regular form, to the polytheism of the ancient world.^{*}

Of philosophers.

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the divine nature, ~~in very curious and important speculation;~~ and in the profound inquiry, they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding.[†] Of the four most celebrated schools, the stoicks and the platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime speculations of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the spirit of god of Plato and his disciples, resembled an animal rather than a substance. The opinions of academics and epicureans were of a less noble cast; but whilst the modest science of former induced them to doubt, the positive

* See, for instance, Cesar de Bell. Gall. vi, 17. Within a century or two, the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, Apollo, &c.

† The admirable work of Cicero de Natura Deorum, is the clue we have to guide us through the dark and profound abysses, which represents with candour and candour, with subtlety, the opinions of the philosophers.

nerance of the latter urged them to deny, the CHAP.
 providence of a supreme ruler. The spirit of ^{II.}
 inquiry, prompted by emulation, and supported
 by freedom, had divided the public teachers of
 philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but
 the ingenious ^{young} who, from every part, re-
 sorted to Athens, and the other seats of learning
 in the Roman empire, were alike instructed, in
 every branch of knowledge, by the same school
 of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible
 that a philosopher should accept, as divine truths,
 the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent
 traditions of antiquity; or, that he should adore,
 as gods, those impotent ^{creatures} whom he must
 have despised as men! Against such unworthy
 adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the
 arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of
 Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as
 more efficacious, weapon. We may be well as-
 sured, that a writer conversant with the world,
 could never have ventured to expose the gods
 of his country to public ridicule, had they not
 already been the objects of secret contempt
 among the polished and enlightened orders of
 society.

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion
 which prevailed in the age of the Antonines,
 both the interests of the priests, and the credulity
 of the people, were sufficiently respected. In their
 writings and conversation, the philosophers of

⁵ I do not pretend to assert, that, in this irreligious age, the na-
 tural terrors of superstition, dreams, omens, apparitions, &c. had lost
 their efficacy.

CHAP. antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing, with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods, and sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely liable to a struggle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Lybian, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind, though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the school of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of supreme

Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero, and Plautus, always inculcated a decent reverence for the religion of their own country, and of mankind. The devoutness of the former was淳厚 and exemplary. *Quæst. Epist. 2, 10.*

power was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals, which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination, as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected, as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion ~~that~~^{of the gods in this or mortal life,} that the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods.¹ But whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced, that the various modes of worship contributed ~~nothing~~ ^{nothing} to military purposes: and that, in every country, the form of superstition, which had received the sanction of time and experience, was the best adapted to the climate, and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods, and the rich ornaments of their temples;² but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tib-

In the pro-
vinces.

¹ Polybius, L vi, c. 53, 54. Juvenal, Sat. xiii, affirms, that in his time this apprehension had lost much of its effect.

² See the fate of Syracuse, Tarantum, Ambracia, Corinth, &c. the conduct of Vercingetorix, in Cicero (Actio ii, Orat. 4), and the usual practice of governors, in the eighth Satire of Juvenal.

C H A P. **R**ius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the druids:¹ but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of paganism.²

A t Rome. Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world,³ who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country.⁴ Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies, and the Roman Senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy.⁵ But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and

¹ Sueton. in Claud.—Plin. Hist. Nat. xxx. 1.

² Pelloutier Histoire des Celtes, tom. vi, p. 230—232.

³ Seneca Consolat. ad Helviam, p. 74. Edit. Lips.

⁴ Dionysius Halicarn. Antiquitat. Roman. l. ii.

⁵ In the year of Rome 701, the temple of Isis and Serapis was demolished by the order of the senate (Dion Cassius, l. xi, p. 260) and cast by the hands of the consul (Valerius Maximus, l. 3). After the death of Caesar, it was restored, at the public expence (Dion, l. xvii, p. 301). When Augustus was in Egypt, he revered the majesty of Serapis (Bion, l. ii, p. 647); but in the Pomarium of Rome, and a mile round it, he prohibited the worship of the Egyptian gods (Dion, l. iii, p. 679, l. iv, p. 729). They remained, however, very fashionable under his reign (Ovid. de Art. Amant. l. i. 150); that of his successor, till the Justice of Tiberius was provoked to some acts of severity. (See Tacit. Annal. ii, 85, Joseph. Antiquit. l. xviii, c. 3).

Serapis at length assumed their place among the CHAP.
Roman deities.⁴ Nor was this indulgence a II.
departure from the old maxims of government.
In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele
and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn em-
bassies ; and it was customary to tempt the
protectors of besieged cities, by the promise of
more distinguished honour than they possessed in
their native country. Rome, however, possessed
the common temple of her subjects ; and the free-
dom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of
mankind.⁵

II. The narrow policy of preserving, without Freedom
any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the an-
cient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hast-
ened the ruin of Athens and Sparta. The
aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to am-
bition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as
honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her
own, wheresoever they were found, among slaves
or strangers, enemies or barbarians.⁶ During
the most flourishing era of the Athenian com-
monwealth, the number of citizens gradually de-
creased from about thirty⁷ to twenty-one thou-

⁴ Tertullian in *Apologetic.* c. 6, p. 74, edit. Havercamp. I am in-
clined to attribute their establishment to the devotion of the Flavian
family.

⁵ See Livy, l. xi. and xxix.

⁶ Macrobi. *Saturnalia*, l. iii, c. 8. He gives us a series of evoca-
tion.

⁷ Minutius Felix in *Octavio*, p. 54. Arnobius, l. vi, p. 115.

⁸ Tacit. *Annot.* xi, 24. The *Orbis Romanus* of the learned Span-
heim is a complete history of the progressive admission of Latium,
Italy, and the provinces, to the freedom of Rome.

⁹ Herodotus, v. 97. It should seem, however, that he followed
a large and popular estimation.

CHAP. II. If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover, that notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men, able to bear arms in the service of their country. ¹ When the Italian states claimed an equal share of honours and power in the senate, indeed, preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic,² and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government, the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude.³ But when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the vanquished nations, only as the first and most honourable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers.

¹ Athenaeus Deipnosophist. I. viii. p. 572, edit. Casaubon. Meursiae de Fortune, book. c. 4.

² See a very exact account of the numbers of each Intransigent. M. de Blaizot, République Romaine, I. iv. c. 4.

³ Appian. de Bell. Civil. I. i. Velleius Paterculus, I. ii. c. 13, 16. 17.

Yet the wisest princes, who adopted the maxims of Augustus, guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.
CHAP. II.

Till the privileges of Romans had been pro- Italy.

gressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former

was the firm basis of the constitution.

Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate. The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes; their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors.

Municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws.

From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, all the natives

of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire.

The republic shrank in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the merit and services of

her subjects.

Mucius Scaevola, the author of the history of the Punic war, advised the Romans to declare all their subjects citizens.

But we may justly suspect that the historian Dion was the author of a counsel so much adapted to the practice of his own age, and little to that of Augustus.

The senators were obliged to have one third of their own landed property in Italy. See Plin. I. vi, ep. 19. The qualification was re-

duced by Marcus to one fourth. Since the reign of Trajan, Italy had sunk nearer to the level of the provinces.

Augustus reduced it to one fifth.

Augustus reduced it to one sixth.

Augustus reduced it to one seventh.

Augustus reduced it to one eighth.

Augustus reduced it to one ninth.

Augustus reduced it to one tenth.

Augustus reduced it to one eleventh.

Augustus reduced it to one twelfth.

Augustus reduced it to one thirteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one fourteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one fifteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one sixteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one seventeenth.

Augustus reduced it to one eighteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one nineteenth.

Augustus reduced it to one twentieth.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-first.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-second.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-third.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-fourth.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-fifth.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-sixth.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-seventh.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-eighth.

Augustus reduced it to one twenty-ninth.

Augustus reduced it to one thirtieth.

CHAP. her adopted sons. Had she always confined the action of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian; it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catæ¹ emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cæcero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the third founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence.²

The provinces.

The provinces of the empire (as they have been described in the preceding chapter) were destitute of any public force, or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece,³ and in Gaul, it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies, which taught mankind, that as the Roman arms prevailed by division,

¹ The first part of the Verona Illustrata of the Marquis de Sade gives the clearest and most comprehensive view of the state of Italy under the Caesars.

² See Pausanias, 1. vii. The Romans endeavoured to restore the names of those assemblies, when they could no longer be dangerous.

³ They are frequently mentioned by Cicero. The Abbé Dubos attempts, with very little success, to prove that the assemblies of Gaul were continued under the emperors. "Histoire de l'Etablissement de la Monarchie Françoise," 1. i, c. 4.

they might be resisted by union. Those princes, ~~char-~~
 whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity
 permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre,
 were dismissed from their thrones, ~~soon as~~
 they had performed their appointed task,
 shewing to ~~the~~ like the vanquished nations.
 The free states and cities which had embraced
 the cause of Rome, were rewarded with a nomi-
 nate ~~power~~
 tude. The public authority was every where
 exercised by the ministers of the senate and of
 the emperors, and that authority was absolute,
 and without control. But the ~~same~~ ~~maxims~~
~~of government~~
 peace and obedience of Italy, were extended
 to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans
 was gradually formed in the provinces, by the
 double expedient of introducing colonies, and of
 admitting the most faithful and deserving of the
 provincials to the freedom of Rome.

"Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he in-
 habits," is a very just observation of Seneca,^a
 confirmed by history and experience. The na-
 tives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest,
 hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and
 we may remark, that about forty years after the
 reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were
 massacred in one day, by the cruel orders of
 Mithridates.^b These voluntary exiles were en-
Colonies
and mu-
nicipal
towns.

^a Seneca in Consolat. ad Helviam, c. 6.

^b Memnon and Photium, c. 23. Valer. Maxim. ix. 5. Plutarch
 and Biog. Caesareus tell the massacre to 150,000 citizens. But I
 should esteem the smaller number to be more than sufficient.

CHAP. V.—For the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled, with their families, in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the more convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent; and they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance; they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages. The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and, in the reign of Hadrian, it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome.¹ The right of Latium;

¹ Twenty-five colonies were settled in Spain (see Min. Hist. Natur. iii. 3, & iv. 35); and nine in Britain, of which London, Colchester, Lincoln, Chester, Gloucester, and Bath, still remain considerable cities (see Richard of Cirencester, p. 36, and Whitaker's History of Manchester, Eng. e. 3).

² Avit. Cell. Noves. Hisp. 10. The emperor Hadrian expressed his surprise, that the cities of Utica, Gades, and Hattes,

as it was called, conferred on the cities to which CHAP.
it had been granted, a more partial favour. The
magistrates only, at the expiration of their office,
assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as
these offices were usually in a few years successively
canceled among the principal families.¹ Those
of the provincials who were permitted to bear
arms in the service, did not exercise any
civil employment.

ed any public service, or displayed any personal
talents, were rewarded with a present, whose
value was continually diminished by the increasing
liberality of the emperors. When even in the
time of the Antonines, when the title of citizen
city had been bestowed on the greater number
of their subjects, it was still accompanied with
very solid advantages. The bulk of the people
acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Ro-
man laws, particularly in the interesting articles
of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and
the road of fortune was open to those whose pre-
tensions were seconded by favour or merit. The
grandsons of the Gauls, who had besieged Julius
Caesar at Alesia, commanded legions, governed
provinces, and were admitted into the senate of
Rome.² Their ambition, instead of disturbing
the tranquillity of the state, was intimately con-
nected with its safety and greatness.

which already enjoyed the rights of citizens, should solicit the title
of coloni.³ Their example, however, became fashionable, and the
empire was filled with honorary colonies. See Spanheim, *de Usu*
coloniarum. Dissertat. xiii.

¹ Spanheim, *crit. Morali*, c. 8, p. 62.

² Aristid. in Romae Encomio, tom. i, p. 218, edit. Jebb.

³ Tacit. Annal. xi, 23, 24, Hist. iv, 74.

CHAP.

II.

Divisions of the Latin and the Greek provinces. Inasmuch as the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the East was less docile than the West, to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible, as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia, that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, among the peasants.¹ Education and study in

¹ See Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 5. Augustin. de Civitate Dei, xix. Lipsius de pronunciatione Lingue Latinae, c. 3.

² Apuleius and Augustin will answer for Africa; Scrobo for Spain and Gaul; Tacitus, in the life of Agricola, for Britain; and Velleius Paterculus for Pannonia. To them we may add the language of the Inscriptions.

³ The Celtic was preserved in the mountains of Wales, Cornwall, and Armorica. We may observe, that Apuleius reproaches the Africans

sensibly inspired the natives of those countries CHAP.
with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave
fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provinces.
They solicited with more ardour, and
obtained with more facility, the honours and
honours of the state; supported the national
unity in letters¹ and in arms; and, at length,
in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor
who was the true representative of their countrymen. The situation of the Romans
was very different from that of the barbarians.
The former had been long since civilized and
corrupted. They had too much pride to relinquish
the manners of their ancestors, and too little to
adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving
the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues,
of their ancestors, they affected to despise the
unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors,
whilst they were compelled to respect their su-
perior wisdom and power.² Nor was the influ-
ence of the Grecian language and sentiments con-
fined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated
country. Their empire, by the progress of col-
onies and conquest, had been diffused from the
~~Mediterranean~~³ to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia

African youth, who lived among the populace, with the use of the
Punic; whilst he had almost forgot Greek, and neither could nor
would speak Latin (*Apolog.* p. 596). The greater part of St. Austin's
congregations were strangers to the Punic.

¹ Spain alone produced Columella, the *Sextus*, *Lucan*, *Martial*,
and *Quintilian*.

² There is not, I believe, from Dionysius to Libanius, a single
Greek writer who mentions Virgil or Horace. They seem ignorant
that the Romans had any good writers.

II. ~~the~~ was crowded with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the ~~ancient~~ ~~inhabitants~~ ~~of~~ ~~Syria~~ ~~and~~ ~~Egypt~~ in Egypt. The use of their ancient dialects, by separating them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians.^t The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt; the sullen ferociousness of latter excited the aversion of the conquerors. Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked, that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed, after the ruin of the Ptolemys, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.

General use of both languages. It is a just, though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe, soon became the favourite object of study and imita-

^t The curious reader may see in Dupin (*Bibliothèque Ecclesiastique*, tom. xix, p. i. c. 8), how much the use of the Syriac and Egyptian languages was ~~lost~~ preserved.

^u See Juvenal, sat. iii. and xv, Ammian. Marcellin. xxii, 16.

^v Dion Cassius, Lib. xlv, p. 124. The first instance happened under the reign of Septimius Severus.

tion in Italy and the western provinces. But the CHAP.
elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the ~~charms~~^{IL} of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government.¹ The two languages possessed of the empire had each its separate jurisdiction throughout the empire. The former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business, were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

It was by such institutions that the nations of Slaves, the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province, and of every family, an unhappy condition of men, who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity, the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Their Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence treatment, and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands

¹ See Valerius Maximus, l. ii, c. 2, n. 2. The emperor Claudius disfranchised an eminent Grecian for not understanding Latin. He was probably in some public office. Suetonius in Claud. c. 16.

CHAP. by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price,^a
 II. accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction,^b the most severe regulations,^c and the most cruel treatment, seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance and the Romans were reduced to the milder, but more tedious, method of propagation. In the numerous families, and particularly in the country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude.^d The existence of a slave became an object of greater value; and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by

^a In the camp of Lucullus, an ox sold for a drachma, and a slave for four drachmas, or about three shillings. Plutarch in *Lucull.* p. 580.

^b Diodorus Siculus in *Elog. Hist.* l. xxxiv and *xxvi.* Florus, II. 19, 20.

^c See a remarkable instance of severity in *Cicero in Verrem*, v. 3:

^d See in *Cicero*, and the other collectors, a great number of inscriptions addressed by slaves to their wives, children, fellow-servants, masters, &c. They are all, most probably, of the imperial age.

fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors ; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished ; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance, or a less cruel master.^d

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave ; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse.^e It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own ; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The

^d See the Augustan History, and a Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the 35th volume of the Academy of Inscriptions, upon the Roman slaves.

^e See another Dissertation of M. de Burigny, in the 37th volume, on the Roman freedmen.

CHAP. consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only, as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, they likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation.¹ Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

Numbers. It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit; but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers.² Without interpreting, in their utmost strictness, the liberal appellations of legions and myriads,³ we may

¹ Spanheim, *Orbis Roman.* l. i. c. 16, p. 124, &c.

² Seneca de Clementia, l. i. c. 24. The original is much stronger, "Quantum periculum immineret si servi nostri numerare nos ex-
" "pissent."

³ See Pliny (*Hist. Natur.* l. xxxiii) and Athenaeus (*Deipnosophist.* l. vi, p. 272).^a The latter boldly asserts, that he knew very many (*τραγουδλας*) Romans who possessed, not for use, but ostentation, ^{ten} and even twenty thousand slaves.

venture to pronounce, that the proportion of CHAP.
 slaves, who were valued as property, was more IL
 considerable than that of servants, who can be
 computed only as an expence.¹ The youths of
 a promising genius were instructed in the arts
 and sciences, and their price was ascertained by
 the degree of their skill and talents.² Almost
 every profession, either liberal³ or mechanical,
 might be found in the household of an opulent
 senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality
 were multiplied beyond the conception of mo-
 dern luxury.^m It was more for the interest of
 the merchant or manufacturer to purchase, than
 to hire his workmen; and in the country, slaves
 were employed as the cheapest and most labori-
 ous instruments of agriculture. To confirm the
 general observation, and to display the multitude
 of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular
 instances. It was discovered, on a very mel-
 ancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were
 maintained in a single palace of Rome.ⁿ The
 same number of four hundred belonged to an
 estate which an African widow, of a very private

¹ In Paris there are not more than 43,700 domestics of every sort, and not a twelfth part of the inhabitants. *Messange Recherches sur la Population*, p. 186.

² A learned slave sold for many hundred pounds sterling: Atticus always bred and taught them himself. Cornel. Nepos in Vit. e. 13.

³ Many of the Roman physicians were slaves. See Dr. Middleton's Dissertation and Defence.

^m Their ranks and offices are very copiously enumerated by Pignorius de Servis.

ⁿ Tacit. Annal. xiv, 43. They were all executed for not preventing their master's murder.

CHAP. condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved
 11. for herself a much larger share of her property.^o
 Freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.^p

Populous-
ness of the
Roman
empire.

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed, that when the emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank, was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable, that there existed, in the time of Claudius, about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex, and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons: a degree of popu-

^o Apuleius in *Apolog.* p. 548, Edit. Delphin.

^p Plin. *Hist. Natur.* l. xxxiii, 47.

lation which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe,⁴ and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government.

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre, and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tyber. The

⁴ Compute twenty millions in France, twenty-two in Germany, four in Hungary, ten in Italy, with its islands, eight in Great Britain and Ireland, eight in Spain and Portugal, ten or twelve in the European Russia, six in Poland, six in Greece and Turkey, four in Sweden, three in Denmark and Norway, four in the Low Countries. The whole would amount to one hundred and five, or one hundred and seven millions. See Voltaire, de Histoire Generale.

CHAP. II. legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force.¹ In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence, both of the prince and people, were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Roman monuments.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces, would be sufficient to prove, that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention; but they are rendered more interesting, by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expence, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

Many of them erected at private expence.

It is natural to suppose, that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble.² The strict economy

¹ Joseph. de Bell. Judaico, l. ii, c. 16. The oration of Agrippa, or rather of the historian, is a fine picture of the Roman empire.

² Sueton. in August. c. 28. Augustus built in Rome the temple and forum of Mars the Avenger; the temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Capitol;

of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. CHAP.
The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his ge- II.....
nius. The public monuments with which Ha-
drian adorned every province of the empire, were
executed not only by his orders, but under his
immediate inspection. He was himself an artist,
and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the
glory of the monarch. They were encouraged
~~by the Antonines, as they contributed to the hap-~~
piness of the people. But if the emperors were
the first, they were not the only architects of their
dominions. Their example was universally imi-
tated by their principal subjects, who were not
afraid of declaring to the world, that they had
spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the
noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud
structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome,
before the edifices, of a smaller scale indeed, but
of the same design and materials, were erected
for the use, and at the expence, of the cities of
Capua and Verona.^t The inscription of the
stupendous bridge of Alcantara, attests that it
was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution
of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny
was entrusted with the government of Bithynia
and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or
most considerable of the empire, he found the
cities within his jurisdiction striving with each

Capitol ; that of Apollo Palatine, with public libraries ; the portico
and basilica of Caius and Lucius ; the porticos of Livia and Octavia ;
and the theatre of Marcellus. The example of the sovereign was
imitated by his ministers and generals ; and his friend Agrippa left
behind him the immortal monument of the Pantheon.

^t See Maffei, Verona illustrata, I. iv, p. 68.

CHAP. other in every useful and ornamental work, that might deserve the curiosity of strangers, or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation.^u The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

Example
of Herodes
Atticus.

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the

^u See the tenth book of Pliny's Epistles. He mentions the following works, carried on at the expence of the cities. At Nicomedia, a new forum, an aqueduct, and a canal, left unfinished by a king; at Nice, a gymnasium, and a theatre, which had already cost near ninety thousand pounds; baths at Prusa and Claudiopolis; and an aqueduct of sixteen miles in length for the use of Singi.

prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, CHAP.
 the officiousness of informers. But the equitable ^{II.}
 Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to
 accept any part of it, and commanded him to
 use, without scruple, the present of fortune.
 The cautious Athenian still insisted, that the
 treasure ~~was~~ too considerable for a subject, and
 that he knew not how to *use it*. *Abuse it, then,*
~~replied the monarch, with a good-natured peev-~~
 ishness; for it is your own.^x Many will be of
 opinion, that Atticus literally obeyed the em-
 peror's last instructions, since he expended the
 greatest part of his fortune, which was much in-
 creased by ~~an advantageous marriage, in the ser-~~
 vice of the public. He had obtained for his son
 Herod, the prefecture of the free cities of Asia;
 and the young magistrate, observing that the
 town of Troas was indifferently supplied with
 water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian,
 three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hun-
 dred thousand pounds) for the construction of a
 new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work,
 the charge amounted to more than double the
 estimate, and the officers of the revenue began
 to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced
 their complaints, by requesting that he might
 be permitted to take upon himself the whole
 additional expence.^y

^x Hadrian afterwards made a very equitable regulation, which divided all treasure-trove between the right of property and that of discovery. Hist. August. p. 9.

^y Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. I. ii. p. 548.

CHAP.
II.
His repu-
tation.

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator, according to the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the forum or the senate. He was honoured with the consulship at Rome; but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens, and his adjacent villas, perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and generous rival.² The monuments of his genius have perished; some considerable ruins still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence: modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla, he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The odeum, designed by Pericles for musical performances, and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over barbaric greatness, as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstand-

* Aulus Gellius, in Noct. Attic. i, 2, ix, 2, xviii, 10, xix, 12. Philostrat. p. 564.

ing the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice CHAP.
by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to ^{II.}
decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and
magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that
illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens.
The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the
temple of Neptune in the isthmus, a theatre at
Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylae, and an aqueduct at Canopus in Italy,
were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The
people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa, Boetia, and
Peloponnesus, experienced his favours; and many
inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia grate-
fully style Herodes Atticus their patron and be-
nefactor.*

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, Most of
the modest simplicity of private houses announced
the equal condition of freedom: whilst the so-
vereignty of the people was represented in the
majestic edifices designed to the public use;^b nor
was this republican spirit totally extinguished by
the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was
in works of national honour and benefit, that the
most virtuous of the emperors affected to dis-
play their magnificence. The golden palace of
Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast ex-
tent of ground which had been usurped by his
selfish luxury, was more nobly filled under the

* See Philostrat. l. ii, p. 548, 560. Pausanias, l. i and vii, 10. The life of Herodes, in the thirtieth volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions.

^b It is particularly remarked of Athens by Dicæarchus, de Statu Græciae, p. 8, inter Geographos Minores, edit. Hudson.

CHAP. succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of
II. Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples
dedicated to the goddess of peace, and to the
genius of Rome.^c These monuments of archi-
tecture, the property of the Roman people, were
adorned with the most beautiful productions of
Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple
of peace, a very curious library was open to the
curiosity of the learned. At a small distance
from thence was situated the forum of Trajan.
It was surrounded with a lofty portico, in the
form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal
arches opened a noble and spacious entrance;
in the centre arose a column of marble, whose
height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the
elevation of the hill that had been cut away.
This column, which still subsists in its ancient
beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the
Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran
soldier contemplated the story of his own cam-
paigns, and by an easy illusion of national va-
nity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to
the honours of the triumph. All the other quar-
ters of the capital, and all the provinces of the
empire, were embellished by the same liberal
spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with
amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, tri-

^c Donatus de Roma Vetere, l. iii, c. 4, 5, 6. Nardini Roma Antica, l. iii, 11, 12, 13, and a MS. description of ancient Rome, by Bernardus Oricellarius, or Rucellai, of which I obtained a copy from the library of the Canon Ricardi at Florence. Two celebrated pictures of Timanthes and of Protogenes are mentioned by Pliny, as in the temple of peace; and the Laocoön was found in the baths of Titus.

umphal arches, baths, and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion, and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last-mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude, that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.^a

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former, and to multiply the latter. It may not be unpleasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations, and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I, *Ancient Italy* is said to have con-

Number
and great-
ness of the
cities of
the empire.

In Italy.

^a Montfaucon l'Antiquité Expliquée, tom. iv, p. 2, l. i, c. 9. Fabretti has composed a very learned treatise on the aqueducts of Rome.

CHAP. tained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities;
 II. and for whatsoever era of antiquity the expression might be intended,^e there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines, than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys, had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which they experienced were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of Verona may be traced in its remains; yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan, or Ravenna. II, The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away, to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities;^f and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the

Gaul and
Spain.

^e Elian. Hist. Var. I. ix, c. 16. He lived in the time of Alexander Severus. See Fabritius, Biblioth. Graeca, I. fv, c. 21.

^f Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii, 16. The number, however, is mentioned, and should be received with a degree of latitude.

wealth and elegance of Italy.⁵ Many were the CHAP. cities of Gaul, Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Nar-^{II.}
bonne, Thoulourse, Bourdeaux, Autun, Vienna,
Lyons, Langres, and Treves, whose ancient con-
dition might sustain an equal, and perhaps ad-
vantageous comparison with their present state.
With regard to Spain, that country flourished as
a province, and has declined as a kingdom.
~~Exhibited by the abuse of her strength by~~
America, and by superstition, her pride might
possibly be confounded, if we required such a
list of three hundred and sixty cities, as Pliny
has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian.*

III, Three hundred African cities had once in Africa.
knownedged the authority of Carthage,¹ nor is
it likely that their numbers diminished under the
administration of the emperors : Carthage itself
rose with new splendour from its ashes ; and that
capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon re-
covered all the advantages which can be separated
from independent sovereignty. IV, The pro- Asia.
vinces of the East present the contrast of Roman
magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The
ruins of antiquity, scattered over uncultivated
fields, and ascribed, by ignorance, to the power
of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the op-
pressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the
reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone con-

* Plin. Hist. Natur. iii, 5.

^b Plin. Hist. Natur. iii, 3, 4; iv. 35. The list seems authentic
and accurate : the division of the provinces, and the different condi-
tion of the cities, are minutely distinguished.

ⁱ Strabon. Geograph. l. xvii, p. 1189.

CHAP. tained five hundred populous cities,^k enriched
 II. with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all
 the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had
 once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple
 to Tiberius, and their respective merits were
 examined by the senate.^l Four of them were
 immediately rejected, as unequal to the burden;
 and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour
 is still displayed in its ruins.^m Laodicea collected
 a very considerable revenue from its flocks of
 sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool,
 and had received, a little before the contest,
 a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds
 by the testament of a generous citizen.ⁿ If such
 was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have
 been the wealth of those cities, whose claim ap-
 peared preferable, and particularly of Pergamus,
 of Smyrna; and of Ephesus, who so long dis-
 puted with each other the titular primacy of

^k Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii, 16. Philostrat. in Vit. Sophist. l. 5, p. 548, edit. Olear.

^l Tacit. Annal. iv, 55. I have taken some pains in consulting
 and comparing modern travellers, with regard to the fate of these
 eleven cities of Asia. Seven or eight are totally destroyed—Hypæra,
 Tralles, Laodicea, Ilium, Halicarnassus, Miletus, Ephesus, and we
 may add Sardes. Of the remaining three, Pergamus is a straggling
 village of two or three thousand inhabitants; Magnesia, under the
 name of Guzel-hissar, a town of some consequence; and Smyrna,
 a great city, peopled by an hundred thousand souls. But even at Smyr-
 na, while the Franks have maintained commerce, the Turks have
 ruined the arts.

^m See a very exact and pleasing description of the ruins of Laodi-
 cea, in Chandler's Travels through Asia Minor, p. 225, &c.

ⁿ Strabo, l. xii, p. 866. He had studied at Tralles.

Asia? The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a ~~char-~~
still superior rank in the empire: Antioch and ^{II.}
Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd
of dependent cities,^P and yielded, with reluctance,
to the majesty of Rome ~~itself~~.

All these ~~cities~~ were connected with each other, ^{Roman} roads.
and with the capital, by the public highways,
which, issuing from the forum of Rome, traversed
It ~~the empire~~, limited only by the frontiers of the empire. If we
carefully trace the distance from the wall of An-
toninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem,
it will be found that the great chain of commu-
nication from the north-west to the south-east
point of the empire, was drawn out to the length
of four thousand and eighty Roman miles.⁴ The public roads were accurately divided by
mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one

* See a Dissertation of M. de Boze, Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xviii. Aristides pronounced an oration, which is still extant, to re-commend concord to the rival cities.

† The inhabitants of Egypt, exclusive of Alexandria, amounted to seven millions and a half (Joseph. de Bell. Jud. &c. 16). Under the military government of the Mamelukes, Syria was supposed to contain sixty thousand villages (Histoire de Timur Bec. L 7, c. 20.)

‡ The following Itinerary may serve to convey some idea of the direction of the road, and of the distance between the principal towns. i. From the wall of Antoninus to York, 222 Roman miles. ii. London 227. iii. Rhutupiæ or Sandwich 67. iv. The navigation to Boulogne 45. v. Rheims 174. vi. Lyons 330. vii. Mi-
lian 324. viii. Rome 426. ix. Brundusium 360. x. The naviga-
tion to Dyrrachium 40. xi. Byzantium 711. xii. Ancyra 283. xiii. Tarsus 301. xiv. Antioch 141. xv. Tyre 252. xvi. Jeru-
salem 168. In all 4080 Roman, or 3740 English miles. See the
itineraries published by Wesselink, his annotations; Gale and Stukely
for Britain, and M. d'Anville for Gaul and Italy.

CHAP. ~~crossed another~~, with very little respect for the
 H. ~~obstacles either of nature or private property.~~
 Mountains were perforated, and bold arches
 thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams.¹
 The middle part of the road was raised into a
 terrace, which commanded the adjacent country,
 consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and
 cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in
 some places near the capital, with granite.
 Such was the solid construction of the Roman
 highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded
 to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united
 the subjects of the most distant provinces by
 an easy and familiar intercourse; but their pri-
 mary object had been to facilitate the marches of
 the legions; nor was any country considered as
 completely subdued, till it had been rendered,
 in all its parts, pervious to the arms and auth-
 ority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiv-
 ing the earliest intelligence, and of conveying
 their orders with celerity, induced the emperors
 to establish, throughout their extensive dom-
 inions, the regular institution of posts.² Houses
 were everywhere erected at the distance only of
 five or six miles; each of them was constantly
 provided with forty horses, and, by the help of
 these relays, it was easy to travel an hundred

¹ Montfaucon, l'Antiquité Expliquée (tom. iv, p. 2, l. i, c. 5), has described the bridges of Narni, Alcantara, Nismes, &c.

² Bergier Histoire des grands Chemins de l'Empire Romain, t. II, c. 1-28.

³ Procopius in Hist. Avaria, c. 30. Bergier Hist. des grands Chemins, t. iv. Codex Theodosian, t. viii, tit. v, vol. ii, p. 500-508, with Godefroy's learned commentary.

miles in a day along the Roman roads.* The ~~char-~~
use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed
it by an imperial mandate; but though originally
intended for the public service, it was
sometimes indulged in the business of the
en^{cy} of private citizens.^{II.} Nor was the ~~char-~~ Naviga-
munication of the Roman empire less free and
open by sea than it was by land. The provinces

Italy, in the shape of an immense peninsula,
advanced into the midst of that great lake. The
coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe
harbours, but ~~the Romans~~ ^{they had corrected the} deficiencies of nature, and ~~one~~ ^{the} port of
Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the
Tyber, and formed by the emperor Claudius,
was an useful monument of Roman greatness.³
From this port, which was only sixteen miles
from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently
carried vessels in seven days to the columns of
Hercules, and, in nine or ten, to Alexandria in
Egypt.⁴

Whatever evils either reason or declamation ^{Improvement of}
have imputed to extensive empire, the power of ^{agricul-}
~~the Romans~~ ^{ture.}

* In the time of Theodosius, Cæsarius, a magistrate of high rank, went post from Antioch to Constantinople. He began his journey at night, was in Cappadocia (165 miles from Antioch) the ensuing evening, and arrived at Constantinople the sixth day about noon. The whole distance was 726 Roman, or 665 English miles. See Libanius Orat. xxii, and the Itinerarium, p. 372-381.

¹ Pliny, through a favourite and a relation, made an apology for granting post-horses to his wife on the most urgent business, Epist. x, l. 12.

² Bergier Hist. des grands Chemins, l. iv, c. 49.

³ Plin. Hist. Natur. xix, l.

CHAP. Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity, the world was unequally divided. The East was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury; whilst the West was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilized nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce, to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe, from Asia and Egypt;* but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads.

1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy; and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange,

Introduction
of
fruits, &c.

* It is not improbable that the Greeks and Phoenicians introduced some new arts and productions into the neighbourhood of Marseilles and Gades.

they contented themselves with applying to all ~~the~~^{the} new fruits the common denomination of ~~the~~^{the} apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In ^{The vine.} the time of ~~Hannibal~~, ^{the} vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the

years afterwards, Italy could boast, that ~~she~~^{she} fourscore most generous and celebrated wines; more than two thirds were produced from her soil.¹ The blessing was soon concentrated to the Narbonnese province, ~~and~~^{and} ~~but~~^{but} there was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul.² This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished, and there is some reason to believe, that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines.³ 3. The olive, in the western ^{The olive.} world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant; it was

¹ See Homer Odyss. l. ix. v. 358.

² Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xiv.

³ Strab. Geograph. l. iv. p. 223. The intense cold of a Gallic winter was almost proverbial among the ancients.

In the beginning of the fourth century, the orator Eumenius (*Paegeyric. Veter.* viii, 6, edit. Delphini) speaks of the vines in the territory of Autun, which were decayed through age, and the first plantation of which was totally unknown. The *Pagus Atebrignus* is supposed by M. d'Avallie to be the district of Beaune, celebrated, even at present, for one of the first growths of Burgundy,

CHAP. ^{II.} naturalized in those countries; and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid ~~writers~~ ^{writers} of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience.^f 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown.^g 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the Lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media.^h The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter, multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which, in their turn, contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added, an studious attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich, and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry, under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed, that those famines, which so frequently afflicted the infant republic, were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

^f Plin. Hist. Natur. I. 19. c. 11.

^g Plin. Hist. Natur. I. 19. c. 12.

^h See the agreeable Essays on Agriculture, by Mr. Harte, in which he has collected all that the ancients and moderns have said of Lucerne.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures, CHAP.
 since the productions of nature are the materials
 of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of
 an industrious and ingenuous people was various-
 ly, but incessantly employed in the service of the
 rich. In their houses, their table, their horses,
 and their furniture, the favourites of fortune
 united every refinement of convenience, of ele-
 gance, and of splendour, to gratify their vanity,
 their pride, or gratify their sensuality. Such
 refinements, under the odious name of luxury,
 have been severely arraigned by the moralists of
 every age; and it might perhaps be more con-
 ductive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of
 mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none
 the superfluities of life. But in the present im-
 perfect condition of society, luxury, though it may
 proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only
 means that can correct the unequal distribution
 of property. The diligent mechanic, and the
 skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the
 division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from
 the possessors of land; and the latter are prompt-
 ed, by a sense of interest, to improve their
 estates, with whose produce they may purchase
 additional pleasures. This operation, the par-
 ticular effects of which are felt in every society,
 acted with much more diffusive energy in the
 Roman world. The provincials would soon have
 been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufac-
 tures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly
 restored to the industrious subjects the sums which
 were exacted from them by the arms and autho-

Arts of
luxury.

CHAP. II. **R**ICHES OF ROME.¹ As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impelled the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

Foreign
trade.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets and other manufactures of the East; but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt on the Red sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the islands of Ceylon,² was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the

¹ Tacit. Germania, &c. 45. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxviii, 11. The latter observed, with some humour, that even fashion had not yet found out the use of amber. Nero sent a Roman knight to purchase great quantities of the spot where it was produced—the coast of modern Prussia.

² Called Taprobana by the Romans, and Screndib by the Arabs. It was discovered under the reign of Claudius, and gradually became the principal mart of the East.

merchants from the more remote countries of ~~CHAP.~~
 Asia expected their arrival. The return of the
 fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of De-
 cember or January; and as soon as their rich
 cargo had been transported, on the backs of
 camels, from the Red sea to the Nile, and had
 descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was
 poured, without delay, into the capital of the
~~empire~~. The objects of oriental traffic were
 splendid and trifling: silk, a pound of which was
 esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of
 gold; ^{H.} precious stones, among which the pearl
 claimed the first rank after the diamond; ^{ii.} and
 a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in
 religious worship and the pomp of funerals.
 The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded
 with almost incredible profit; but the profit was
 made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals
 were enriched at the expence of the public. As the natives of Arabia and India were ^{Geld and}
~~contented with the productions and manufactures~~ ^{silver.}
 of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only instrument
 of commerce. It was a complaint worthy
 of the gravity of the senate, that in the pursuit
 of female ornaments the wealth of the state

I. Plin. Hist. Natur. L. vi. Strabo, L. xvii.

^{ii.} Hist. August. p. 224. A silk garment was considered as an ornament to a woman, but as a disgrace to a man.

The two great pearl fisheries were the same as at present—Cormuz and Cape Comorin. As well as we can compare ancient with modern geography, Rome was supplied with diamonds from the mine of Ju-melpur, in Bengal, which is described in the Voyages de Tavernier, tom. ii, p. 281.

CHAP. was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations." The annual loss is computed by a writer of an inquisitive, but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling.^p Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet if we compare the proportion between gold and silver as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine,^q there is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past, and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt, and honestly confessed, by the provincials as well as Romans. They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, "town, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome."

^{*} Tacit. Annal. iii, 52. In a speech of Tiberius.

^p Plin. Hist. Natur. xii, 18. In another place he computes this sum; Quingenties M. S. for India, exclusive of Arabia.

^q The proportion, which was 1 to 10, and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$, rose to 14 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ by the legal regulation of Constantine. See Arbuthnot's Tables of Ancient Coins, c. 5.

" under whose auspicious influence the fiercest CHA
 " barbarians were united by an equal govern- II.
 " ment and common language. They affirm,
 " that, with the improvement of arts, the human
 " species was visibly multiplied. They cele-
 " brate the increasing splendour of the cities
 " the beautiful face of the country, cultivated
 " and adorned like an immense garden, and the
 " boundless fields of peace which were possessed by
 " so many nations, forgetful of their animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger." Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation, which seems to pervade these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level; the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum, supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained; but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independ-

* Among many other passages, see Pliny (Hist. Natur. iii, 5), Ariosto (de Urbe Româ), and Tertullian (de Animi, c. 30).

CHAP. even the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

of genius. The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer, as well as Virgil, were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit.* The sciences of physic and astronomy

* Herodes Atticus gave the sophist Polemo above eight thousand pounds for three declamations. See Philostrat. l. i. p. 558. The Antonines founded a school at Athens, in which professors of grammar, rhetoric, politics, and the four great sects of philosophy, were maintained at the public expence, for the instruction of youth. The salary of a philosopher was ten thousand drachmæ, between three and four hundred pounds a-year. Similar establishments were formed in the other great cities of the empire. See Lucian in Eunuchus tom. ii. p. 353, edit. Reitz. Philostrat. l. ii. p. 566. Hist. August. p. 21. Dion Cassius, l. Ixxi, p. 1195. Juvenal himself, in a mere satire, which, in every line, betrays his own disappointment and envy, is obliged, however, to say,

—O Juvenes, circumspicit et agitat vos,
Materiamque sibi Divitiae indulgentia querit.

were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the CHAP.
observations of Ptolemy, and the writings of Galen, II.
are studied by those who have improved their
discoveries, and corrected their errors; but if we
except the inimitable Lucian, this age of inno-
lence passed away without having produced a
single writer of original genius, or who excelled
in the arts of elegant composition. The authority
of ~~the great writers of antiquity~~, still reigned in the schools; and their systems,
transmitted, with blind deference, from one ge-
neration of disciples to another, precluded every
generous attempt to exercise the powers, or
enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The gen-
ties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling
a fire like their own, inspired only cold and ser-
vile imitations; or, if any ventured to deviate
from those models, they deviated, at the same
time, from good sense and propriety. On the
revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the ima-
gination, after a long repose, national emulation,
a new religion, new languages, and a new world,
called forth the genius of Europe. But the pro-
vinces of Rome, trained by an uniform artificial
foreign education, were engaged in a very un-
equal competition with those bold ancients, who,
by expressing their genuine feelings in their na-
tive tongue, had already occupied every place of
honour. The name of poet was almost forgotten;
that of orator was usurped by the sophists. A
cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators,
darkened the face of learning; and the decline
of genius was soon followed by the corruption
of taste.

CHAP. The sublime Longinus, who, in somewhat later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pygmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined; thus our tender minds, from want of exercise and habits of a just discipline, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients; who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." The diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pygmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in, and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

Longin. de Sublim. c. 43, p. 229, edit. Toll. Here, too, we may say of Longinus,—" His own example strengthens all his laws." Instead of proposing his sentiments with a manly boldness, he insinuates them with the most guarded caution, puts them into the mouth of a friend, and, as far as we can collect from a corrupted text, makes a shew of refuting them himself.

CHAP. III.

*Of the constitution of the Roman empire, in the age
of the Antonines.*

The obvious definition of a monarchy seems to be that of a state, in which a single person, by whatsoever name he may be distinguished, is entrusted with the execution of the laws, the management of the revenue, and the command of the army. But, unless public liberty is protected by intrepid and vigilant guardians, the authority of so formidable a magistrate will soon degenerate into despotism. The influence of the clergy, in an age of superstition, might be usefully employed to assert the rights of mankind; but so intimate is the connection between the throne and the altar, that the banner of the church has very seldom been seen on the side of the people. A martial nobility and stubborn commons, possessed of arms, tenacious of property, and collected into constitutional assemblies, form the only balance capable of preserving a free constitution against enterprizes of an aspiring prince.

Every barrier of the Roman constitution had been levelled by the vast ambition of the dictator; every fence had been extirpated by the cruel hand of the triumvir. After the victory of Actium, the fate of the Roman world depended on the will of Octavianus, surnamed Cæsar, by his uncle's adoption, and afterwards

CHAP.
III.Idea of a
monarchy.Situation
of Augus-
tus.

CHAP. III. Augustus, by the flattery of the senate. The conqueror was at the head of forty-four veteran legions,* conscious of their own strength, and of the weakness of the constitution, habituated, during twenty years civil war, to every act of blood and violence, and passionately devoted to the house of Cæsar, from whence alone they had received, and expected, the most lavish rewards. The provinces, long oppressed by the ministers of the republic, sighed for the government of a single person, who would be the master, not the accomplice, of those petty tyrants. The people of Rome, viewing, with a secret pleasure, the humiliation of the aristocracy, demanded bread and public shows, and were supplied with both by the liberal hand of Augustus. The rich and polite Italians, who had almost universally embraced the philosophy of Epicurus, enjoyed the present blessings of ease and tranquillity, as suffered not the pleasing dream to be interrupted by the memory of their old tumultuous freedom. With its power, the senate had lost its dignity; many of the most noble families were extinct. The republicans of spirit and ability had perished in the field of battle, or in the proscription. The door of the assembly had been designedly left open for a mixed multitude of more than a thousand persons, who reflected disgrace upon their rank, instead of deriving honour from it.

* Orosius, vi. 18.

Julius Cæsar introduced soldiers, strangers, and half barbarians into the Senate (Sueton. in Cæsar, c. 77, 80). This abuse became still more scandalous after his death.

The reformation of the senate was one of the first steps in which Augustus laid aside the tyrant, and professed himself the father of his country. He was elected censor; and, in concert with his faithful Agrippa, he examined the list of the senators, expelled a few members, whose vices or whose obstinacy required a public example, persuaded near two hundred to prevent the shame of an expulsion by a voluntary ~~resignation~~^{III.} reduced the qualification of a senator to about ten thousand pounds, created a sufficient number of patrician families, and accepted for himself the honourable title of prince of the senate, which had always been bestowed, by the censors, on the citizen the most eminent for his honours and services. But whilst he thus restored the dignity, he destroyed the independence of the senate. The principles of a free constitution are irrecoverably lost, when the legislative power is nominated by the executive;

Before an assembly thus modelled and prepared, Augustus pronounced a studied oration, which displayed his patriotism, and disguised his ambition. “ He lamented, yet excused, his past conduct. Filial piety had required at his hands the revenge of his father’s murder; the humanity of his own nature had sometimes given way to the stern laws of necessity, and to a forced connection with two unworthy colleagues: as long as Antony lived, the republic

^c Dica Cossini, I. lili, p. 693. Suetonius in August. c. 55.

CHAP. " forced him to abandon her to a degenerate Ro
 III. " man, and a barbarian queen. He was now at
 liberty to satisfy his duty and his inclination.

" He solemnly restored the senate and people to
 " all their ancient rights; and wished only to
 " mingle with the crowd of his fellow citizens,
 " and to share the blessings which he had ob-
 " tained for his country."

Is prevail-
ed upon to
resume it,
under the
title of
emperor or
general. It would require the pen of Tacitus (if Tacitus
 had assisted at this assembly) to describe the va-
 rious emotions of the senate, those that were
 suppressed, and those that were affected. It
 was dangerous to trust the sincerity of Augustus
 to seem to distrust it, was still more dangerous.

The respective advantages of monarchy and
 republic have often divided speculative inquirers;
 the present greatness of the Roman state, the
 corruption of manners, and the licence of the
 soldiers, supplied new arguments to the advo-
 cates of monarchy; and these general views of
 government were again warped by the hopes and
 fears of each individual. Amidst this confusion
 of sentiments, the answer of the senate was uni-
 nymous and decisive. They refused to accept the
 resignation of Augustus; they conjured him not
 to desert the republic which he had saved.
 After a decent resistance, the crafty tyrant sub-
 mitted to the orders of the senate, and consented
 to receive the government of the provinces.

* Dion (l. lili, p. 698) gives us a plain and bombast speech on
 this great occasion. I have borrowed from Suetonius and Tacitus the
 general language of Augustus.

and the general command of the Roman armies, ^{CHAR.}
 under the well-known names of *Proconsul* and ^{III.}
Imperator.^{*} But he would receive them only
 for ten years. Even before the expiration of that
 period, he hoped that the wounds of civil dis-
 cord would be completely healed, and that the
 republic, restored to its pristine health and vi-
 gour, would no longer require the dangerous
 interposition of so extraordinary a magistrate.
 The memory of this comedy, repeated several
 times during the life of Augustus, was preserved
 to the last ages of the empire, by the peculiar
 pomp with which the perpetual monarchs of
 Rome always solemnized the tenth year of their
 reign!

Without any violation of the principles of the constitution, the general of the Roman armies might receive and exercise an authority almost despotic over the soldiers, the enemies, and the subjects of the republic. With regard to the soldiers, the jealousy of freedom had, even from the earliest ages of Rome, given way to the hopes of conquest, and a just sense of military discipline. The dictator, or consul, had a right to command the service of the Roman youth; and to punish an obstinate or cowardly disobedience by the most severe and ignominious pe-

* *Imperator* (from which we have derived emperor) signified, under the republic, no more than *general*, and was emphatically bestowed by the soldiers, when on the field of battle they proclaimed their victorious leader worthy of that title. When the Roman emperors assumed it in that sense, they placed it after their name, and marked how often they had taken it.

^f Dion, l. lli, p. 703, &c.

CHAP. ~~XXVII.~~^{XXVIII.} by striking the offender out of the list of citizens, by confiscating his property, and by selling his person into slavery.^c The most sacred rights of freedom, confirmed by the Porcian and Sempronian laws, were suspended by the military engagement. In his camp the general exercised an absolute power of life and death; his jurisdiction was not confined by any forms of trial, or rules of proceeding, and the execution of the sentence was without appeal.^d The choice of the enemies of Rome was regularly decided by the legislative authority. The most important resolutions of peace and war were seriously debated in the senate, and solemnly ratified by the people. But when the arms of the legions were carried to a great distance from Italy; the generals assumed the liberty of directing them against whatever people, and in whatever manner they judged most advantageous for the public service. It was from the success, not from the justice, of their enterprises, that they expected the honours of a triumph. In the case of victory, especially after they were no longer controlled by the commissioners of the senate, they exercised the most unbounded despotism. When Pompey commanded in the East, he rewarded his soldiers and allies, dethroned princes,

^c Livy Epitom. l. xiv. Valer. Maxm. vi, 2.

^d See in the eighth book of Livy, the conduct of Mutilus Torquatus and Papirius Cursor. They violated the laws of nature and humanity, but they asserted those of military discipline; and the people who suffered the action, were obliged to respect the principle.

divided kingdoms, founded colonies, and distributed the treasures of Mithridates. On his return to Rome, he obtained, by a single act of the senate and people, the universal ratification of all his proceedings.¹ Such was the power over the soldiers, and over the enemies of Rome, which was either granted to, or assumed by, the generals of the republic. They were, at the same time, the governors of the provinces, united the civil with the military character, administered justice as well as the finances, and exercised both the executive and legislative power of the state.

From what has been already observed in the first chapter in this work, some notion may be formed of the armies and provinces thus intrusted to the ruling hand of Augustus. But as it was impossible that he could personally command the legions of so many distant frontiers, he was indulged by the senate, as Pompey had already been, in the permission of devolving the execution of his great office on a sufficient number of lieutenants. In rank and authority these officers seemed not inferior to the ancient praetors; but their station was dependent and precarious. They received and held their commissions at

¹ By the lavish, but uncontrolled, suffrages of the people, Pompey had obtained a military command merely inferior to that of Augustus. Among the extraordinary acts of power exercised by the former, we may remark the foundation of twenty-nine cities, and the distribution of above four millions sterling to his troops. The ratification of his acts met with some opposition and delays in the senate. See Plutarch, Appian, Dion Cassius, and the first book of the epistles to Atticus.

CHAP. the will of a superior, to whose *auspicious influence* the merit of their actions was legally attributed.* They were the representatives of the emperor. The emperor alone was the general of the republic, and his jurisdiction, civil as well as military, extended over all the conquests of Rome. It was some satisfaction, however, to the senate, that he always delegated his power to the members of their body. The imperial lieutenants were of ~~considerable importance~~, the legions were commanded by senators, and the prefecture of Egypt was the only important trust committed to a Roman knight.

Division of
the pro-
vinces be-
tween the
emperor
and the se-
nate.

Within six days after Augustus had been compelled to accept so very liberal a grant, he resolved to gratify the pride of the senate by an easy sacrifice. He represented to them, that they had enlarged his powers, even beyond that degree which might be required by the melancholy condition of the times. They had not permitted him to refuse the laborious command of the armies and the frontiers; but he must insist on being allowed to restore the more peaceful and secure provinces to the mild administration of the civil magistrate. In the division of the provinces, Augustus provided for his own power,

* Under the commonwealth, a triumph could only be claimed by the general, who was authorized to take the *suspites* in the name of the people. By an exact consequence, drawn from this principle of policy and religion, the triumph was reserved to the emperor; and his most successful lieutenants were invested with some marks of distinction, which, under the name of triumphal honours, were intended in their favour.

and for the dignity of the republic. The pro- CHAP.
consuls of the senate, particularly those of Asia, III
Greece, and Africa, enjoyed a more honourable character than the lieutenants of the emperor, who commanded in Gaul or Syria. The former were attended by lictors, the latter by soldiers. A law was passed, that wherever the emperor was present, his extraordinary commission should supersede the ordinary jurisdiction of the governor; a custom was introduced, that the new conquests belonged to the imperial portion; and it was soon discovered, that the authority of the prince, the favourite epithet of Augustus, was the same in every part of the empire.

In return for this imaginary concession, Au- The former gustus obtained an important privilege, which preserves his mili- rendered him master of Rome and Italy. By a tary com- dangerous exception to the ancient maxims, he mand and was authorized to preserve his military command, guards in Rome it- supported by a numerous body of guards, even self. in time of peace, and in the heart of the capital. His command, indeed, was confined to those citizens who were engaged in the service by the military oath; but such was the propensity of the Romans to servitude, that the oath was voluntarily taken by the magistrates, the senators, and the equestrian order, till the homage of flattery was insensibly converted into an annual and solemn protestation of fidelity.

Although Augustus considered a military force Consular and tribu- as the firmest foundation, he wisely rejected it, as nitian a very odious instrument of government. It was powers, more agreeable to his temper, as well as to his

CHAP. III. policies to reign under the venerable names of ancient magistracy, and artfully to collect, in his own person, all the scattered rays of civil jurisdiction. With this view, he permitted the senate to confer upon him, for his life, the powers of the consular¹ and tribunitian offices,² which were, in the same manner, continued to all his successors. The consuls had succeeded to the kings of Rome, and represented the dignity of the state. They superintended the ceremonies of religion, levied and commanded the legions, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and presided in the assemblies both of the senate and people. The general controul of the finances was intrusted to their care; and though they seldom had leisure to administer justice in person, they were considered as the supreme guardians of law, equity, and the public peace. Such was their ordinary jurisdiction: but whenever the senate empowered the first magistrate to consult the safety of the commonwealth, he was raised by that degree above the laws, and exercised, in the defence of liberty, a temporary despotism.

¹ Cicero (*de Legibus*, iii, 3) gives the consular office the name of *regia potestas*; and Polybius (l. vi, c. 3) observes three powers in the Roman constitution. The monarchical was represented and exercised by the consuls.

² As the tribunitian power (distinct from the annual office) was first invented for the dictator Cæsar, (Dion, l. xliv, p. 384), we may easily conceive that it was given as a reward for having so nobly asserted, by arms, the sacred rights of the tribunes and people. See his own commentaries, *de Bell. Civil.* l. i.

³ Augustus exercised nine annual magistracies without interruption. He then most artfully refused that magistracy, as well as the dictatorship,

The character of the tribunes was, in every respect, different from that of the consuls. The appearance of the former was modest and humble; but their persons were sacred and inviolable. Their force was suited rather for opposition than for action. They were instituted to defend the oppressed, to pardon offences, to arraign the enemies of the people, and, when they judged it necessary, to stop by a single word the whole machine of government. As long as the republic subsisted, the dangerous influence, which either the consul or the tribune might derive from their respective jurisdictions, was diminished by several important restrictions. Their authority expired with the year in which they were elected; the former office was divided between two, the latter among ten persons; and, as both in their private and public interest they were averse to each other, their mutual conflicts contributed, for the most part, to strengthen rather than to destroy the balance of the constitution. But when the consular and tribunitian powers were united, when they were vested for life in a single person, when the general of the army was, at the same time, the minister of the senate and the representative of the Roman people, it was impossible to resist the exercise, nor was it easy to define the limits, of his imperial prerogative.

Caesar, during his dictatorship, absented himself from Rome, and waited till the fatal effects of tumult and faction forced the senate to invest him with a perpetual censorship. Augustus, as well as his successors, affected, however, to conceal so invidious a title.

CHAP. III. ~~Augustus~~ accumulated honours, the policy of ~~Augustus~~ soon added the splendid as well as important dignities of supreme pontiff, and of censor. By the former he acquired the management of the religion, and by the latter a legal inspection over the manners and fortunes of the Roman people. If so many distinct and independent powers did not exactly unite with each other, the complaisance of the senate was prepared to supply every deficiency by the most ample and extraordinary concessions. The emperors, as the first ministers of the republic, were exempted from the obligation and penalty of many inconvenient laws; they were authorized to convoke the senate, to make several motions in the same day, to recommend candidates for the honours of the state, to enlarge the bounds of the city, to employ the revenue at their discretion, to declare peace and war, to ratify treaties; and by a most comprehensive clause, they were empowered to execute whatever they should judge advantageous to the empire, and agreeable to the majesty of things, private or public, human or divine.^{*}

The magistracy. When all the various powers of executive government were committed to the imperial magistrate, the ordinary magistrates of the commonwealth languished in obscurity, without vigour, and almost without business. The names and

* See a fragment of a decree of the senate, conferring on the emperor Vespasian all the powers granted to his predecessors, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. This curious and important monument is published in Gruter's Inscriptions, No. ccxlii.

forms of the ancient administration were preserved, by Augustus, with the most anxious care. CHAR.
III.
The usual number of consuls, praetors, and tribunes,² were annually invested with their respective ensigns of office, and continued to discharge some of their least important functions. Those honours still attracted the vain ambition of the Romans, and the emperors themselves, though invested for life with the power of the consulship, frequently aspired to the title of that annual dignity, which they condescended to share with the most illustrious of their fellow-citizens.³ In the election of these magistrates, the people, during the reign of Augustus, were permitted to expose all the inconveniences of a wild democracy. That artful prince, instead of discovering the least symptom of impatience, humbly solicited their suffrages for himself or his friends; and scrupulously practised all the duties

² Two consuls were appointed on the calends of January; but, in the course of the year, others were substituted in their places, till the annual number seems to have amounted to no less than twenty. The praetors were usually sixteen or eighteen (Tacit. Annal. i. 1, ad Tacit. Annal. i. 1). I have not mentioned the aediles or questors. Offices of the police or revenue easily adapt themselves to any form of government. In the time of Nero, the tribunes legally possessed the right of intercession, though it might be dangerous to exercise it (Tacit. Annal. xvi, 26). In the time of Trajan, it was doubtful whether the tribuneship was an office or a name (Plin. Epist. i, 23).

³ The tyrants themselves were ambitious of the consulship. The virtuous princes were moderate in the pursuit, and exact in the discharge of it. Trajan revived the ancient oath, and swore before the consuls' tribunes, that he would observe the laws (Plin. Panegyric.

CHAP. CXXVII.—*ordinary candidate.** But we may venture to ascribe to his councils, the first measure of the succeeding reign, by which the elections were transferred to the senate.* The assemblies of the people were for ever abolished, and the emperors were delivered from a dangerous multitude, who, without restoring liberty, might have disturbed, and perhaps endangered, the established government.

The senate. By declaring themselves the representatives of the people, Marcellus and Caesar had inverted the constitution of their country. But as soon as the senate had been humbled and disarmed, such an assembly, consisting of five or six hundred persons, was found a much more tractable and useful instrument of dominion. It was on the dignity of the senate, that Augustus and his successors founded their new empire; and they affected, on every occasion, to adopt the language and principles of patricians. In the administration of their own powers, they frequently consulted the great national council, and seemed to refer to its decision the most important concerns of peace and war. Rome, Italy, and the internal provinces, were subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the senate. With regard to civil

* Quoties Magistratus Comitiis interesset. Tribus eum satis suis circuibat: supplicabatque more solemnis. Exebat et ipsius suffragium in tribubus, ut unus e populo. Suetonius in Augusto, c. 56.

Tum primam Comitie e campis ad patres translata sunt. Tacit. Annal. i. 15. The word *patres* seems to allude to some faint and unsuccessful efforts, which were made towards restoring them to the people.

jects, it was the supreme court of appeal; with regard to criminal causes, a tribunal, constituted for the trial of all offences that were committed by men in any public station, or that affected the peace and integrity of the Roman people. The exercise of judicial power became the most frequent and serious occupation of the senate; and the important causes that were pleaded before them, showed a high degree of ancient eloquence. As a council of state, and as a court of justice, the senate possessed very considerable prerogatives; but in its legislative capacity, in which it was supposed virtually to represent the people, the rights of sovereignty were acknowledged to reside in that assembly. Every power was derived from their authority, every law was ratified by their sanction. Their regular meetings were held on three stated days in every month, the calends, the nones, and the ides. The debates were conducted with decent freedom; and the emperors themselves, who gloried in the name of senators, sat, voted, and divided with their equals.

To resume, in a few words, the system of the imperial government, as it was instituted by Augustus, and maintained by those princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, it may be defined an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves

General
idea of the
imperial
system.

CHAP. the respectable ministers of the senate, whose
¹¹¹ supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed.
^{Court of}
^{the empe-}
^{rors.} The face of the court corresponded with the forms of the administration. The emperors, ¹¹² we except those tyrants whose capricious folly violated every law of nature and decency, disdained that pomp and ceremony which might offend their countrymen, but could add nothing to their real power. In all the offices of life they affected to ~~confound~~ themselves with their subjects, and maintained with them an equal intercourse of visits and entertainments. Their habit, their palace, their table, were suited only to the rank of an opulent senator. Their family however numerous or splendid, was composed entirely of their domestic slaves and freedmen. Augustus or Trajan would have blushed at employing the meanest of the Romans in those ministerial offices, which, in the household and bed-chamber of a limited monarch, are so eagerly solicited by the proudest nobles of Britain.

^t Dion Cassius (l. liii, p. 703-714) has given a very loose and partial sketch of the imperial system. To illustrate, and often to correct, him, I have meditated Tacitus, examined Suetonius, and consulted the following moderns: The Abbé de la Bleterie, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, tom. xix, xxi, xxiv, xxv, xxvi. Salmon, *République Romaine*, tom. i, p. 255-275. The Dissertations of Niebuhr and Gronovius, *de lege Regia*, printed at Leyden, in the year 1731. Gravina de Imperio Romano, p. 479-544 of his Opuscula. Maffei Verona Illustrata, p. i, p. 245, &c.

^u A weak prince will always be governed by his domestics. The power of slaves aggravated the shame of the Romans; and the slaves paid court to a Pallas or a Narcissus. There is a chance that a modern favourite may be a gentleman.

The deification of the emperors^x is the only instance in which they departed from their accustomed prudence and modesty. The Asiatic Greeks were the first inventors, the successors of Alexander the first objects, of this servile and impious mode of adulation. It was easily transferred from the kings to the governors of Asia; and the Roman magistrates very frequently were adulated provincial deities, with the pomp of altars and temples, of festivals and sacrifices. It was natural that the emperors should not refuse what the proconsuls had accepted; and the divine honours which both the one and the other received from the provinces, attested rather the despotism than the servitude of Rome. But the conquerors soon imitated the vanquished nations in the arts of flattery; and the imperious spirit of the first Caesar too easily consented to assume, during his lifetime, a place among the tutelar deities of Rome. The milder temper of his successor declined so dangerous an ambition, which was never afterwards revived, except by the madness of Caligula and Domitian. Augustus permitted indeed some of the provincial cities to erect temples to his honour, on condition that they should associate the worship of Rome with that of the sovereign; he tolerated private super-

^x See a treatise of Vandale de Consécratione Principem. It would be easier for me to copy, than it has been to verify, the quotations of that learned Dutchman.

^y See a dissertation of the Abbé Mongault, in the first volume of the Academy of Inscriptions.

CHAP. ~~III.~~^{which he might be the object;}² but he contented himself with being revered by the senate and people in his human character, and wisely left to his successor, the care of his public deification. A regular custom was introduced, that on the decease of every emperor who had neither lived nor died like a tyrant, the senate by a solemn decree should place him in the number of the gods; and the ceremonies of his apotheosis were ~~performed at his funeral~~. Truly, ~~and~~, it should seem, injudicious profanation, so abhorrent to our stricter principles, was received with a very faint murmur by the easy nature of polytheism; but it was received as an institution, not of religion but of policy. We should disgrace the virtues of the Antonines, by comparing them with the vices of Hercules or Jupiter. Even the characters of Caesar or Augustus were far superior to those of the popular deities. But it was the misfortune of the former to live in an enlightened age, and their actions were too faithfully recorded to admit of such a mixture of fable and mystery, as the devotion of the vulgar requires. As soon as their divinity was established by law, it sunk into oblivion, without contributing either to their own fame, or to the dignity of succeeding princes.

² Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus eris, says Horace to the emperor himself; and Horace was well acquainted with the court of Augustus.

The Ciceronian *Philippic*, i. 6. *Ad Catilinam*. Inque Deum tempila, jucabit Roma, per quidem, is the indignant expression of Lucan; but it is a patriotic, rather than a devout, indignation.

In the consideration of the imperial government, we have frequently mentioned the artful founder, under his well-known title of Augustus, which was not, however, conferred upon him till the edifice was almost completed. The obscure name of Octavianus he derived from a mean family in the little town of Aricia. It was stained with the blood of the proscription; and he was desirous had it been possible, ~~to efface all memory~~ of his former life. The illustrious surname of Cæsar, he had assumed, as the adopted son of the dictator; but he had too much good sense, either to hope to be confounded; or to wish to be compared, with that extraordinary man. It was proposed in the senate, to dignify their minister with a new appellation; and after a very serious discussion, that of Augustus was chosen, among several others, as being the most expressive of the character of peace and sanctity, which he uniformly affected.^b Augustus was therefore a personal Cæsar, a family distinction. The former should naturally have expired with the prince on whom it was bestowed; and however the latter was diffused by adoption and female alliance, Nero was the last prince who could allege any hereditary claim to the honours of the Julian line. But, at the time of his death, the practice of a century had inseparably connected those appellations with the imperial dignity, and they have been preserved by a long succession of

^b Dion Cassius, vol. iii., p. 710, with the curious annotations of Keymar.

CHAP. III. Romans, Greeks, Franks, and Germans, from the fall of the republic to the present time. A distinction was, however, soon introduced. The sacred title of Augustus was always reserved for the monarch, whilst the name of Cæsar was more freely communicated to his relations; and, from the reign of Hadrian at least, was appropriated to the second person in the state, who was considered as the presumptive heir of the empire.

Character and policy of Augustus.

The tender respect of Augustus for a free constitution which he had destroyed, can only be explained by an attentive consideration of the character of that subtle tyrant. A cool head, unfeeling heart, and a cowardly disposition prompted him, at the age of nineteen, to assume the mask of hypocrisy, which he never afterwards laid aside. With the same hand, and probably with the same temper, he signed the proscription of Cicero, and the pardon of Cinna. His virtues, and even his vices, were artificial; according to the various dictates of his interest, he was at first the enemy, and at last the friend, of the Roman world. When he framed his artful system of the imperial authority, his design was inspired by his fears. He wished to

* As Octavianus advanced to the banquet of the Caesars, his colour changed like that of the chameleon; pale at first, then red, afterwards black; he at last assumed the mild liveliness of Venus and the grace of Cæsars, p. 309). This image, employed by Julian, in his ingenious fiction, is just and elegant; but when he considers this change of character as due to the influence of the power of philosophy, he does too much honour to philosophy, and to Octavianus.

deceive the people by an image of civil liberty, CHAR.
and the armies by an image of civil govern-
ment. III.

1. The death of Caesar was ever before his Image of
eyes. He had lavished wealth and honours on liberty for
his adherents; but the most favoured friends of the people,
his uncle were in the number of the conspirators. The fidelity of the legions might defend his
country against foreign invasion, but personal
lance could not secure his person from the danger of a determined republican; and the Romans, who revered the memory of Brutus,⁴ would applaud the imitation of his virtue. Caesar had
provoked his fate, as much by the ostentation of
his power, as by his power itself. The consul
or the tribune might have reigned in peace.
The title of king had armed the Romans against
his life. Augustus was sensible that mankind is
governed by names; nor was he deceived in his
expectation, that the senate and people would
submit to slavery, provided they were respectfully
assured that they still enjoyed their ancient free-
dom. A feeble senate and enervated people cheer-
fully subsisted in the pleasing illusion, as long as
it was supported by the virtue, or even by the pru-
dence, of the successors of Augustus. It was a
motive of self-preservation, not a principle of
liberty, that animated the conspirators against
Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. They attacked

⁴ Two centuries after the establishment of monarchy, the emperor Marcus Antonius recommends the character of Brutus as a perfect model of Roman virtue.

CHAP. III. the lesson of the tyrant, without aiming their blow at the authority of the emperor.

Attempt of the senate after the death of Caligula.

There appears, indeed, one memorable occasion, in which the senate, after seventy years of patience, made an ineffectual attempt to reassume its long-forgotten rights. When the throne was vacant by the murder of Caligula, the consuls convoked that assembly in the capitol, condemned the memory of the Cæsars, gave the watchword *liberty* to the new cohorts who faintly adhered to their standard, and during eight-and-forty hours, acted as the independent chiefs of free commonwealth. But while they deliberated the prætorian guards had resolved. The stupid Claudius, brother of Germanicus, was already in their camp, invested with the imperial purple, and prepared to support his election by arms. The dream of liberty was at an end; and the senate awoke to all the horrors of inevitable servitude. Desereted by the people, and threatened by a military force, that feeble assembly was compelled to ratify the choice of the praetorian guard to embrace the benefit of an amnesty, which Claudius had the prudence to offer, and the generosity to observe.*

Image of government for the armies.

17. The insolence of the armies inspired Augustus with fears of a still more alarming nature. The despair of the citizens could only attempt what the power of the soldiers was at any time.

* It is much to be regretted, that we have lost the part of Tacitus which treated of these transactions. We are forced to content ourselves with the popular rumours of Josephus, and the imperfect lives of Dion and Suetonius.

able to execute. How precarious was his own CHAP.
authority over men whom he had taught to vio- III.
late every social duty ! He had heard their sedi-
tious clamours ; he dreaded their calmer mo-
ments of reflection. One revolution had been
purchased by immense rewards ; but a second
revolution might double those rewards. The
troops professed the fondest attachment to the
house of Caesar ; but the attachments of the ma-
titude are capricious and inconstant. Augustus
summoned to his aid whatever remained in those
fierce minds of Roman prejudices ; enforced the
rigour of discipline by the sanction of law ; and,
interposing the majesty of the senate between the
emperor and the army, boldly claimed their alle-
giance, as the first magistrate of the republic.¹

During a long period of two hundred and twenty years, from the establishment of this artful system to the death of Commodus, the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. The soldiers were seldom roused to that fatal sense of their own strength, and of the weakness of the civil authority, which was, before and afterwards, productive of such dreadful calamities. Caligula and Domitian were assassinated in their palace by their own domestics : the convulsions which agitated Rome on the death of the former, were confined to the walls of the city. But Nero involved the

Their obe-
dience.

¹ Augustus restored the ancient severity of discipline. After the civil war, he dropped the endearing name of fellow-soldiers, and called them only soldiers (Sueton. in August. c. 25). See the use Tiberius made of the senate, in the mutiny of the Pannonian legions (Tacit. Annal. i).

CHAP. III. ^{III.} empire in his ruin. In the space of eighteen months, four princes perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting only this short, though violent, eruption of military licence, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions. The emperor was elected by the authority of the senate, and the consent of the soldiers. The legions respected their oath of fidelity, and it requires a minute inspection of the Roman annals, to discover three inconsiderable rebellions, which were all suppressed in a few months, and without even the hazard of a battle.¹

Designa-
tion of a
successor. In the elective monarchies, the vacancy of the throne is a moment big with danger and mischief. The Roman emperors, desirous to spare the legions that interval of suspense, and the temptation of an irregular choice, invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power, as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder, without suffering the empire to perceive the change of masters. This

¹ These three have been the constitutional language of Tertius Annalium.

The first was Cassius Sopbonianus, who took up arms in Dalmatia against Claudius, and was deserted by his own troops in five days. The second, L. Antonius, in Germania, who rebelled against Domitian; and the third, Avidius Cassius, in the reign of M. Antoninus. The two last reigned but a few months, and were cut off by their own adherents. It may observe, that both the milites and Caesars, had a right to associate with the government of regarding the republic; a task, said Cassius, peculiarly reserved for his name and family.

Augustus, after all his fairer prospects had been snatched from him by untimely deaths, rested his last hopes on Tiberius, obtained for his adopted son the censorial and tribunitian powers, and dictated a law, by which the future prince was invested with authority equal to his own, over the provinces and the armies.¹ Thus Vespa-^{of Titus.}
sian subdued the generous mind of his eldest son. ^{Titus was adored by the eastern legions,} which under his command, had recently achieved the conquest of Judea. His power was dreaded, and, as his virtues were clouded by the intemperance of youth, his designs were suspected. Instead of listening to such unworthy suspicions, the prudent monarch associated Titus to the full powers of the imperial dignity; and the grateful son ever approved himself the humble and faithful minister of so indulgent a father.²

The good sense of Vespasian engaged him in-
deed to embrace every measure that might confirm his recent and precarious elevation. The military oath, and the fidelity of the troops, had been consecrated, by the habits of six hundred years, to the name and family of the Caesars; and although that family had been continued only by the fictitious rite of adoption, the Romans still revered, in the person of Nero, the grandson of Germanicus, and the lineal successor of Augustus. It was not without reluctance and remorse, that the praetorian guards had been

- The race of
the Cæsars
and the
Flavian fa-
mily.

¹ Valerius Flaccus, l. ii, c. 121. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 29.

² Sueton. in Tit. c. 6. Plin. in Prefat. Hist. Natur.

CHAP. III. ~~permitted~~ to abandon the cause of the tyrant.
 The grand downfall of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius taught the armies to consider the emperors as the creatures of *their* will, and the instruments of *their* licence. The birth of Vespasian was mean; his grandfather had been a private soldier, his father a petty officer of the revenue;^m his own merit had raised him, in an advanced age, to the empire; but his merit was rather useful than shining, and his virtues were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony. Such a prince consulted his true interest by the association of a son whose more splendid and amiable character might turn the public attention, from the obscure origin to the future glories, of the Flavian house. Under the mild administration of Titus, the Roman world enjoyed a transient felicity, and his beloved memory served to protect, above fifteen years, the vices of his brother Domitian.

¶ p. 96.
 Adoption and character of Trajan.

Nerva had scarcely accepted the purple from the assassins of Domitian, before he discovered that his feeble age was unable to stem the torrent of public disorders, which had multiplied under the long tyranny of his predecessor. His mild disposition was respected by the good; but the degenerate Romans required a more vigorous character, whose justice should strike terror into the guilty. Though he had several relations, he

¹ This idea is frequently and strongly inculcated by Tacitus. See Hist. i, 5, 16, ii, 76.

^m The emperor Vespasian, with ~~his usual~~ good sense, laughed at the genealogists, who derived his family from Flavius, the founder of Reate (his native country), and one of the companions of Heracles, but in Vespasian. c. 12.

fixed his choice on a stranger. He adopted Trajan, then about forty years of age, and who commanded a powerful army in the lower Germany; and immediately, by a decree of the senate, declared him his ~~colleague~~^{CHAP.} ~~and successor~~^{III.} in the empire.^a It is sincerely to be lamented, that^{a. p. 93.} whilst we are fatigued with the disgusting relation of Nero's crimes and follies, we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the gaudierings of an abridgement, or the doubtful light of a panegyric. There remains, however, one panegyric far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. Above two hundred and fifty years after the death of Trajan, the senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus, and the virtue of Trajan.^b

We may readily believe, that the father of his country hesitated whether he ought to entrust the various and doubtful character of his kinsman Hadrian with sovereign power. In his last moments, the arts of the empress Plotina either fixed the irresolution of Trajan, or boldly supposed a fictitious adoption;^c the truth of which could not be safely disputed, and Hadrian was

^a Dion, l. lxviii, p. 1121. Plin. Secund. in Panegyric.

^b Felicior Augusto, MELIOR TRAJANO. Eutrop. viii, 5.

^c Dion (l. ixix, p. 1249) affirms the whole to have been a fiction, on the authority of his father, who being governor of the province where Trajan died, had very good opportunities of sifting this mysterious transaction. Yet Dodwell (Prælect. Camden, xvii) has maintained that Hadrian was called to the certain hope of the empire during the lifetime of Trajan.

CHAP. II. acknowledged as his lawful successor. His reign, as has been already mentioned, the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline, and visited all his provinces in person. His vast and active genius was equally suited to the most enlarged views and the minute details of civil policy. But the ruling passions of his soul were curiosity and vanity. As these passions were, they were directed by different objects; Hadrian was, by turns, an excellent prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant. The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise for its equity and moderation. Yet in the first days of his reign, he put to death four consular senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him, at last, peevish and cruel. The senate doubted whether they should pronounce him a god or a tyrant; and the honours due to his memory were granted to the prayer of the pious Antoninus.¹

Adoption
of the el-
der and
younger
Verus.

The caprice of Hadrian influenced his choice of a successor. After revolving in his mind several names of distinguished merit, whom he esteemed and hated, he adopted Ælius Verus, a gay and voluptuous nobleman, recommended by uncommon beauty to the favor of Antinous.

¹ Dion (xx, p. 112). Aural. Victor.

² The deficiency of monuments, medals, statues, temples, cities, oracles, &c., of which we have known, and still do know, in memory of Hadrian. Yet we may remark, that of the first fifteen emperors,

But while Hadrian was deluging himself with CHAP.
his own applause, and the acclamations of the
soldiers, whose favour had been secured by an
immense donation, the new Caesar was ravished
from his embrace by an untimely death.* He
left only a son. Hadrian commended the boy
to the gratitude of the Antonines. He was
adopted by Pius; and, on the accession of Mar-
cus, was invested with an equal share of sover-
eign power. Among the many vices of this
younger Verus, he possessed one virtue; a duti-
ful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom
he willingly abandoned the ruder cares of empire.
The philosophic emperor dissembled his folly,
lamented his early death, and cast a decent veil
over his memory.

As soon as Hadrian's passion was either grati- Adoption
fied or disappointed, he resolved to deserve the ^{of the two} Antonines.
thanks of posterity, by placing the most exalted
merit on the Roman throne. His discerning eye
easily discovered a senator about fifty years of
age, blameless in all the offices of life, and a
youth of about seventeen, whose riper years
opened a fair prospect of every virtue; the elder
of these was declared the son and successor of
Hadrian, on condition, however, that he himself
should immediately adopt the younger. The
two Antonines (for it is of them that we are now
speaking) governed the Roman world forty-two A. D. 138—
180.

^{curiosité} This was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct. For the honours of Antinous, see Spanheim *Commentaire sur les Césars de Julien*, p. 80.

* Hist. August. p. 13. *Aurelius Victor in Epitom.*

CHAP. IV. With the same invariable spirit of wisdom
 III. and virtue. Although Pius had two sons,¹ he preferred the welfare of Rome to the interest of his family, gave his daughter Faustina in marriage to young Marcus, obtained from the Senate the tribunitian and proconsular powers, and with a noble disdain, or rather ignorance of jealousy, associated him to all the labours of government. Marcus, on the other hand, revered the character of his father, loved him as parents obey him as his sovereign,² and, as he was no more, regulated his own administration by the example and maxims of his predecessor. Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of great people was the sole object of government.

Character
and reign
of Pius.

Titus Antoninus Pius has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice, and peace, was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of those virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests. Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greatest part of the earth. His reign is marked by the rare advantage of furnishing very few materials for history; which is, indeed, little more than the

¹ Without the help of medals and inscriptions, we should be ignorant of this fact, so honourable to the memory of Pius.

² During the summer of Antoninus Pius's reign, Marcus was only two nights absent from the palace, and even those were at different times. Hist. August. p. 25.

register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind. In private life, he was an amiable, as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity or affectation. He enjoyed, with moderation, the conveniences of his fortune, and the innocent pleasures of society; and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper.

The virtue of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was of Marcus of a severer and more laborious kind.¹ It was the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years, he embraced the rigid system of the stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external, as things indifferent.² His

¹ He was fond of the theatre, and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex. Marcus Antoninus, i. 16. Hist. August. p. 20, 21. Julian in Caesar.

² The enemies of Marcus charged him with hypocrisy, and with a want of that simplicity which distinguished Pius, and even Verus (Hist. August. 6, 54). This suspicion, unjust as it was, may serve to account for the superior applause bestowed upon personal qualifications, in preference to the social virtues. Even Marcus Antoninus has been called a hypocrite, but the wildest scepticism never insinuated that Cæsar might possibly be a coward, or Tully a fool. Wit and valour are qualifications more easily ascertained than humanity or the love of justice.

Tacitus has characterized, in a few words, the principles of the portico: Doctores sapientiae secutus est, qui sola bona quæ honesta, malis tantum quæ turpia; potentiam, nobilitatem, ceteraque extra seculum, neque bonae neque malae adnumerant. Tacit. Hist. iv, 5.

CHAP. ~~III.~~
III. composed in the tumult of a camp
are extant; and he even condescended
to give lessons of philosophy, in a more public
manner than was perhaps consistent with the
modesty of a sage, or the dignity of an emper-
or.^a But his life was the noblest comment
on the precepts of Zoroaster. He was severe to him-
self, indulgent to the imperfection of others,
just and beneficent to all mankind. He regretted
that Avidius Cassius had been induced, by a voluntary
desire of the pleasure of converting an enemy
into a friend; and he justified the sincerity of
sentiment, by moderating the zeal of the
soldiers against the adherents of the traitor.^b War
was detested, as the disgrace and calamity of human
nature; but when the necessity of a just defense
called upon him to take up arms, he readily
expended his strength to eight winter campaigns
upon the frozen banks of the Danube, the severities
which was at last fatal to the weakness of his
constitution. His memory was revered by a grateful
posterity; and above a century after his death
many persons preserved the image of Marcus
Cassius among those of their household gods.
The emperors were called to fix the period in
the history of the world during which the condition
of the human race was most happy and pros-

Happiness
of the Ro-
mans.

^a Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people during which he had already遍游 the cities of Greece and Asia.

^b Dion, l. lxxi, p. 1130. Hist. August. in Avid. Cassius.

^c Hist. August. in Marc. Antonin. c. 18.

and he would without hesitation, name that century which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire, and the absolute power, under the emperors, were now at their height. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the constitution were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the name of restorers of the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just, but melancholy reflection, however, must often have recollect ed the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse to the destruction that absolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct

CHAR. the power of the emperor. The military force was a bold and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their master.

Memory of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Domitian. These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human nature which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, saved them from oblivion. The dark unmeaning Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the Claudio*s*, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius,^d and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting

Vitellius consumed by mere eating, at least six thousand pounds of money in about seven months. It is not easy to express his vices with dignity, or even decency. Tacitus fairly calls him "a hog"; it is by substituting to a coarse word a very fine image. "At Vespasianus, umbraculis hortorum abditus, ut ignava animalia, si cibum suggerseris jacent torpentque, praterita, instantia, futurum, per oblivione dimiserat." *Annals* viii. cap. 19. "In se Arcino desiderans mareantem," &c. *Life of Vespasian*, ii. 95. Sueton. in *Vitellio*, c. 12. Dion Cassius, l. lxxv. p. 1062.

During fourscore years (excepting only the short ~~cessation~~^{III.} and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign*) Rome groaned beneath an unremitting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue, and every talent, that arose in that unhappy period.

Under the reign of these monsters, the slavery of the Romans was accompanied with two peculiar circumstances, the one occasioned by their former liberty, the other by their extensive conquests, which rendered their condition more completely wretched than that of the victims of tyranny in any other age or country. From these causes were derived, 1. The exquisite sensibility of the sufferers; and, 2. The impossibility of escaping from the hand of the oppressor.

1. When Persia was governed by the descendants of Sefi, a race of princes, whose wanton cruelty often stained their divan, their table, and their bed, with the blood of their favourites, there is a saying recorded of a young nobleman, that he never departed from the sultan's presence, without satisfying himself whether his head was still on his shoulders. The experience of every day might almost justify the scepticism of Rustan.[†] Yet the fatal sword, suspended above him by a single thread, seems not to have disturbed the slumbers, or interrupted the tranquillity, of the Persian. *The monarch's frown,*

* The execution of Helvidius Priscus, and of the Virtuous Eporma, disgraced the reign of Vespasian.

† Voyage de Chardin en Perse, vol. iii, p. 293.

CHAP. he well knew, could level him with the dust; but the stroke of lightning or apoplexy might be equally fatal; and it was the part of a wise man, to forget the inevitable calamities of human life in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour. He was dignified with the appellation of the king's slave; had, perhaps, been purchased from obscure parents, in a country which he had never known; and was trained up from his infancy in the severe discipline of the ~~servile~~. His name, his wealth, his honour, were the gift of a master, who might, without injustice, resume what he had bestowed.

Rustan's knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices. His language afforded not words for any form of government, except absolute monarchy. The history of the East informed him, that such had ever been the condition of mankind.^a The Koran, and the interpreters of that divine book, inculcated to him, that the sultan was the descendant of the prophet, and the vicegerent of heaven; that patience was the first virtue of a mussulman, and unlimited obedience the great duty of a subject.

Knowledge and free spirit of the Romans. The minds of the Romans were very differently prepared for slavery. Oppressed beneath the weight of their own corruption and of military violence, they for a long while preserved the

* The practice of raising slaves to the great offices of state is still more common among the Turks than among the Persians. The miserable countries of Georgia and Circassia supply rulers to the greatest part of the east.

Chardin says, that French travellers have diffused among the Persians some ideas of the freedom and mildness of our government. They have done them a very ill office.

CHAP.
III.

sentiments, or at least the ideas, of their free-born ancestors. The education of Helvidius and Thrasea, of Tacitus and Pliny, was the same as that of Cato and Cicero. From Grecian philosophy, they had learned the justest and most liberal notions of the dignity of human nature, and the origin of civil society. The history of their own country had taught them to revere a ~~free, virtuous, and a victorious~~ commonwealth; to abhor the successful crimes of Cæsar and Augustus; and inwardly to despise those tyrants whom they adored with the most abject flattery. As magistrates and senators, they were admitted into the great council, which had once dictated laws to the earth, whose name still gave a sanction to the acts of the monarch, and whose authority was so often prostituted to the vilest purposes of tyranny. Tiberius, and those emperors who adopted his maxims, attempted to disguise their murders by the formalities of justice, and perhaps enjoyed a secret pleasure in rendering the senate their accomplice as well as their victim. By this assembly, the last of the Romans were condemned for imaginary crimes and real virtues. Their infamous accusers assumed the language of independent patriots, who arraigned a dangerous citizen before the tribunal of his country; and the public service was rewarded by riches and honours. The servile judges pro-

¹ They alleged the example of Scipio and Cato (Tacit. Annal. iii, 62). Marcellus Epirus and Crispus Vibius had acquired two

millions =

CHAP. fear to assert the majesty of the commonwealth, violated in the person of its first magistrate,¹ whose clemency they most applauded when they trembled the most at his inexorable and impending cruelty.² The tyrant beheld their baseness with just contempt, and encountered their secret sentiments of detestation with sincere and avowed hatred for the whole body of the senate.

Extent of
their em-
pire left
them no
place of
refuge.

II. The division of Europe into a number of independent states, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language, and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to the liberty of mankind. A modern tyrant, who should find no resistance either in his own breast, or in his people, would soon experience a gentle restraint from the example of his equals, the dread of present censure, the advice of his allies, and the apprehension of his enemies. The object of his displeasure, escaping from the narrow limits of

millions and a half under Nero. Their wealth, which aggravated their crimes, protected them under Vespasian. See Tacit. Histor. 43. Dialog. de Orator. c. 8. For one accusation, Regulus, the object of Pliny's satire, received from the senate the consular ensigns, and a present of sixty thousand pounds.

¹ The crime of majesty was formerly a treasonable offence against the Roman people. As tribunes of the people, Augustus and Tiberius applied it to their own persons, and extended it to an infinite latitude.

² After the virtuous and unfortunate widow of Germanicus had been put to death, Tiberius received the thanks of the senate for his clemency. She had not been publicly strangled; nor was the body drawn with a hook to the Germans, where those of common malefactors were exposed. See Tacit. Annal. vi. 25. Suetonius: Tiberio, c. 53.

his dominions, would easily obtain, in a happier ~~climate~~^{CHAP.} III.
 climate, a secure refuge, a new fortune adequate
 to his merit, the freedom of complaint, and per-
 haps the means of revenge. But the empire of
 the Romans ~~filled~~^{was} the world, and when that
 empire fell into the hands of a single person, the
 world became a safe and dreary prison for his
 enemies. The slave of imperial despotism, whe-
 ther he was condemned to drag his gilded chain
 in Rome and the senate, or to wear out a life of
 exile on the barren rock of Seriphus, or the fro-
 zen banks of the Danube, expected his fate in
 silent despair.^m To resist was fatal, and it was
 impossible to fly. On every side he was encom-
 passed with a vast extent of sea and land, which
 he could never hope to traverse without being
 discovered, seized, and restored to his irritated
 master. Beyond the frontiers, his anxious view
 could discover nothing, except the ocean, in-
 hospitable deserts, hostile tribes of barbarians,
 of fierce manners and unknown language, or
 dependent kings, who would gladly purchase the
 emperor's protection by the sacrifice of an ob-
 noxious fugitive.ⁿ "Wherever you are," said

^m Seriphus was a small rocky island in the Ægean sea, the inhab-
 itants of which were despised for their ignorance and obscurity.
 The place of Ovid's exile is well known, by his just, but unmanly
 lamentations. It should seem, that he only received an order to
 leave Rome in so many days, and to transport himself to Tomi.
 Guards and gaolers were unnecessary.

ⁿ Under Tiberius, a Roman knight attempted to fly to the Par-
 thians. He was stopt in the streights of Sicily; but so little danger
 did

CHAP. Cix. to the exiled Marcellus, "remember that
III. you are equally within the power of the con-
queror."^o

did there appear in the example, that the most jealous of tyrants
disdained to punish it. Tacit. Annal. vi, 14.

* Cicero ad Familiare, iv, 7.

CHAP. IV.

The cruelty, &c., and murder of Commodus.—Election of Pertinax.—His attempts to reform the state.—His assassination of the praetorian guards.

THE mildness of Marcus, which the rigid discipline of the stoics was unable to eradicate, formed, at the same time, the most amiable, and the only defective, part of his character. His excellent understanding was often deceived by the unsuspecting goodness of his heart. Artful men, who study the passions of princes, and conceal their own, approached his person in the disguise of philosophic sanctity, and acquired riches and honours by affecting to despise them." His excessive indulgence to his brother, his wife, and his son, exceeded the bounds of private virtue, and became a public injury, by the example and consequences of their vices.

C H A P.
IV.Indulgence
of Marcus

Faustina, the daughter of Pius, and the wife to his wife Faustina; of Marcus, had been as much celebrated for her gallantries as for her beauty. The grave simplicity of the philosopher was ill calculated to engage her wanton levity, or to fix that unbounded passion for variety, which often discovered personal merit in the meanest of man-

* See the complaints of Avidius Cassius, Hist. August. p. 45. These are, it is true, the complaints of faction; but even faction exaggerates, rather than invents.

CHAP. IV. kind.^b The Cupid of the ancients, was, in general, a very sensual deity; and the amours of an empress, as they exact on her side the plainest advances, are seldom susceptible of much sentimental delicacy. Marcus was the only man in the empire who seemed ignorant or insensible of the irregularities of Faustina; which, according to the prejudices of every age, reflected some disgrace on the injured husband. He promoted several of her lovers to posts of honour and profit; and during a connection for thirty years, invariably gave her proofs of the most tender confidence, and of a respect which ended not with her life. In his meditations, he thanks the gods, who had bestowed on him a wife, so faithful, so gentle, and of such a wonderful simplicity of manners.^c The obsequious senate, at his earnest request, declared her a goddess. She was represented, in her temples, with the attributes of Juno, Venus, and Ceres; and it was decreed that, on the day of their nuptials, the youth of either sex should pay their vows before the altar of their chaste patroness.^d

^b Faustinam satis constat apud Cayetam, conditiones, sibi et naufragis et gladiatoriis, elegisse. Hist. August. p. 30. Lampridius explains the sort of merit which Faustina chose, and the conditions which she exacted. Hist. August. p. 102.

^c Hist. August. p. 31.

^d Meditat. l. i. The world has laughed at the credulity of Marcus; but Madam Dacier assures us (and we may credit a lady) that the husband will always be deceived, if the wife condescends to dissemble.

^e Dion. Cassius, l. lxxi, n. 118. Hist. August. p. 33. Commentaire de Sappho, sur le Critique de Julien, p. 289. The deficiency of Faustina is the only defect which Julian's criticism is able to discover in the all-accomplished character of Marcus.

The monstrous vices of the son have cast a CHAP.
shade on the purity of the father's virtues. It IV.
has been objected to Marcus, that he sacrificed to his son
the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for
a worthless boy; and that he chose a successor in
his own family, rather than in the republic.
Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious
father, and by the men of virtue and learning
whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand
the narrow mind of young Commodus, to cor-
rect his growing vices, and to render him wor-
thy of the throne, for which he was designed.
But the power of instruction is seldom of much
efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where
it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson
of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obli-
terated by the whisper of a profligate favourite;
and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this
laboured education, by admitting his son, at the
age of fourteen or fifteen, to a full participation of
the imperial power. He lived but four years after-
wards; but he lived long enough to repent a rash
measure, which raised the impetuous youth above
the restraint of reason and authority.

Most of the crimes which disturb the internal Accession
peace of society, are produced by the restraints of the em-
which the necessary, but unequal laws of pro- per Com-
perty have imposed on the appetites of man- modus.
kind, by confining to a few the possession of
those objects that are coveted by many. Of all
our passions and appetites, the love of power is
of the most imperious and unsociable nature, since
the pride of one man requires the submission of

CHAP. the multitude. In the tumult of civil discord,
 IV. the laws of society lose their force, and their place
 is seldom supplied by those of humanity. The
 ardour of contention, the pride of victory, the
 despair of success, the memory of past injuries,
 and the fear of future dangers, all contribute to
 inflame the mind, and to silence the voice of
 pity. From such motives almost every page of
 history has been stained with civil blood; but
 these motives will not account for the unpro-
 voked cruelties of Commodus, who had nothing to
 a. a. 180. wish, and every thing to enjoy. The beloved
 son of Marcus succeeded to his father, amidst
 the acclamations of the senate and armies,¹ and
 when he ascended the throne, the happy youth
 saw round him neither competitor to remove, nor
 enemies to punish. In this calm elevated station,
 it was surely natural, that he should prefer the
 love of mankind to their detestation, the mild
 glories of his five predecessors, to the ignomino-
 us fate of Nero, and Domitian.

*Character
of Com-
modus.*

Yet Commodus was not, as he has been repre-
 sented, a tyger born with an insatiate thirst of
 human blood, and capable, from his infancy, of
 the most inhuman actions.² Nature had formed
 him of a weak, rather than a wicked disposition.
 His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave
 of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his

¹ Commodus was the first *Porphyrogenitus* (born since his father's accession to the throne). By a new species of flattery, the Egyptian medals date by the years of his life, as if they were synonymous to those of his reign. Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. ii, p. 742.

² Hist. August. p. 46.

mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the CHAP.
dictates of others, degenerated into habit, and at IV.
length became the ruling passion of his soul.^a

Upon the death of his father, Commodus found himself ~~embarrassed~~^{He returns} with the command of to Rome.
a great army, and the conduct of a difficult war against the Quadi and Marcomanni.^b The servile and profligate youths whom Marcus had banished, soon regained their station and influence about the new emperor. They exaggerated the hardships and dangers of a campaign in the wild countries beyond the Danube; and they assured the indolent prince, that the terror of his name, and the arms of his lieutenants, would be sufficient to complete the conquest of the dismayed barbarians, or to impose such conditions, as were more advantageous than any conquest. By a dexterous application to his sensual appetites, they compared the tranquillity, the splendour, the refined pleasures of Rome, with the tumult of a Pannonian camp, which afforded neither leisure nor materials for luxury.^c Commodus listened to the pleasing advice; but whilst he hesitated between his own inclination, and the awe which he still retained for his father's counsellors, the summer insensibly elapsed, and his triumphal entry into the capital was deferred till the autumn. His graceful person,^d popular address, and imagined

^a Dion Cassius, l. lxxii, p. 1803.

^b According to Tertullian (Apolog. c. 25), he died at Sirmium. But the situation of Vindobona, or Vienna, where both the Victors place his death, is better adapted to the operations of the war against the Marcomanni and Quadi.

^c Herodian, l. i, p. 12.

^d Herodian, l. i, p. 16.

CHAP. ~~IV.~~ virtue attracted the public favour; the honourable peace which he had recently granted to the barbarians, diffused an universal joy; his impatience to revisit Rome was fondly ascribed to the love of his country; and his dissolute course of amusements was faintly condemned in a prince of nineteen years of age.

During the three first years of his reign, the forms, and even the spirit of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors, to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the licence of sovereign power; but his hands were yet unstained with blood, and he had even displayed a generosity of sentiment, which might, perhaps, have ripened into solid virtue.* A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

Is wounded
by an assas-
sin,
A.D. 183. One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace, through a dark and narrow portico of the amphitheatre, an assassin, who waited in the passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword, loudly exclaiming, “The senate sends you this.” The menace prevented the deed; the assassin was seized by the guards, and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy. It had been formed

* This universal joy is well described (from the medals as well as historians) by Mr. Wotton, Hist. of Rome, p. 192, 188.

Manilius, the confidential secretary of Avidius Cassius, was discovered after he had been concealed several years. The emperor nobly relieved the public anxiety, by refusing to see him, and burning his papers without opening them. Dion. Cassius, l. lxxii, p. 1809.

* See Maffei degli Amphitheatri, p. 126.

not in the state, but within the walls of the CHAP.
palace. Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow
of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank,
and jealous of the reigning empress, had armed
the murderer against her brother's life. She had
not ventured to communicate the black design to
her second husband Claudius Pompeianus, a sena-
tor of distinguished merit and unshaken loyalty;
~~but among the crowd of her slaves (for she~~
imitated the manners of Faustina) she found men
of desperate fortunes and wild ambition, who were
prepared to serve her more violent, as well as her
tender passions. The conspirator experienced
the rigour of justice, and the abandoned princess
was punished, first with exile, and afterwards
with death.^p

But the words of the assassin sunk deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of fear and hatred against the whole body of the senate. Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected as secret enemies. The delators, ~~a crew of men discour-~~
~~aged~~, and almost extinguished, under the former reigns, again became formidable, as soon as they discovered that the emperor was desirous of finding disaffection and treason in the senate. That assembly, whom Marcus had ever considered as the great council of the nation, was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal.

Hatred and
cruelty of
Commodus
towards the
senate.

^p Dion, l. xxii, p. 1205. Herodian, l. i, p. 16. Hist. August., p. 46.

CHAP. The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence
IV. of the informers; rigid virtue implied a tacit
censure of the irregularities of Commodus; im-
portant services implied a dangerous superiority
of merit; and the friendship of the father always
ensured the aversion of the son. Suspicion was
equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation.
The execution of a considerable senator was at-
tended with the death of all who might lament
or revenge his fate; and when Commodus had
once tasted human blood, he became incapable
of pity or remorse.

The Quintilian brothers.

Of these innocent victims of tyranny, none
died more lamented than the two brothers of the
Quintilian family, Maximus and Condianus,
whose fraternal love has saved their names from
oblivion, and endeared their memory to poster-
ity. Their studies and their occupations, their
pursuits and their pleasures, were still the same.
In the enjoyment of a great estate, they never
admitted the idea of a separate interest; some
fragments are now extant of a treatise which they
composed in common; and in every action of
life it was observed, that their two bodies were
animated by one soul. The Antonines, who
valued their virtues, and delighted in their union,
raised them, in the same year, to the consul-
ship; and Marcus afterwards entrusted to their
joint care the civil administration of Greece,
and a great military command, in which they
obtained a signal victory over the Germans. The

kind cruelty of Commodus united them in CHAP.
death.⁴ IV.

The tyrant's rage, after having shed the noblest blood of the senate, at length recoiled on the principal instrument of his cruelty. Whilst Commodus was immersed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis, a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The prætorian guards were under his immediate command; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, surprised, and put to death. The fall of a minister^{A.D. 186.} is a very trifling incident in the general history of the empire; but it was hastened by an extraordinary circumstance, which proved how much the nerves of discipline were already relaxed. The legions of Britain, discontented with the administration of Perennis, formed a deputation of fifteen hundred select men, with instructions to march to Rome, and lay their complaints before the emperor. These military petitioners,

⁴ In a note upon the Augustan History, Casaubon has collected a number of particulars concerning these celebrated brothers. See p. 96 of his learned commentary.

CHAP. by their own determined behaviour, by inflaming the divisions of the guards, by exaggerating the strength of the British army, and by alarming the fears of Commodus, exacted and obtained the minister's death, as the only redress of their grievances.* This presumption of a distant army, and their discovery of the weakness of government, was a sure presage of the most dreadful convulsions.

Revolt of
Maternus.

The negligence of the public administration was betrayed soon afterwards, by a new disorder which arose from the smallest beginnings. spirit of desertion began to prevail among the troops; and the deserters, instead of seeking their safety in flight or concealment, infested the highways. Maternus, a private soldier, of daring boldness above his station, collected these bands of robbers into a little army, set open the prisons, invited the slaves to assert their freedom, and plundered with impunity the rich and defenceless cities of Gaul and Spain. The governors of the provinces, who had long been the spectators, and perhaps the partners, of his predations, were at length roused from their supine indolence by the threatening commands of the emperor. Maternus found that he was encompassed, and foresaw that he must be overpowered. A great effort of despair was his last resource. He ordered his followers to disperse,

* Dion, l. Ixxii, p. 1210; Herodian, l. i, p. 22; Hist. August. p. 49. Dion gives a much less odious character of Petrenius, than the other historians. His moderation is almost a pledge of his vacuity.

to pass the Alps in small parties and various disguises, and to assemble at Rome, during the licentious tumult of the festival of Cybele.¹ To murder Commodus, and to ascend the vacant throne, was ~~the ambition~~ of no vulgar robber. His measures were so ably concerted, that his concealed troops already filled the streets of Rome. The envy of an accomplice discovered and ruined this singular enterprise, in the moment when it was ripe for execution.²

Suspicious princes often promote the lowest of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence, except on their favour, will have no attachment, except to the person of their benefactor. Cleander, the successor of Perennis, was a Phrygian by birth; of a nation, over whose stubborn, but servile temper, blows only could prevail.³ He had been sent from his native country to Rome, in the capacity of a slave. As a slave he entered the imperial palace, rendered himself useful to his master's passions, and rapidly ascended to the most exalted station which a subject could enjoy. His influence over the mind of Commodus was much greater than that of his predecessor; for Cleander was devoid of

CHAP.
IV.

The minis-
ter Clean-
der.

¹ During the second punic war, the Romans imported from Asia the worship of the mother of the gods. Her festival, the *Megalesia*, began on the fourth of April, and lasted six days. The streets were crowded with mad processions, the theatres with spectators, and the public tables with unbidden guests. Order and police were suspended, and pleasure was the only serious business of the city. See Ovid, *de Fastis*, l. iv, 189, &c.

² Herodian, l. i. p. 23, 28.

³ Cicero pro Flacco, c. 27.

CHAP. any ability or virtue which could inspire the emperor with envy or distrust. Avarice was the reigning passion of his soul, and the great principle of his administration. The rank of consul, of patrician, of senator, was exposed to public sale; and it would have been considered as disaffection, if any one had refused to purchase these empty and disgraceful honours with the greatest part of his fortune.^x In the lucrative provincial employments, the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned, but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge.

By these means, Cleander, in the space of three years, had accumulated more wealth than had ever yet been possessed by any freedman.^y Commodus was perfectly satisfied with the magnificent presents which the artful courtier laid at his feet in the most seasonable moments. To divert the public envy, Cleander, under the emperor's name, erected baths, porticos, and places of exercise, for the use of the people.^z He

^x One of these dear-bought promotions occasioned a current bon mot, that Julius Solon was banished into the senate.

^y Dion (l. lxxii, p. 12, 13) observes, that no freedman had possessed riches equal to those of Cleander. The fortune of Pallas amounted, however, to upwards of five and twenty hundred thousand pounds; *ter millies*.

^z Dion, l. lxxii, p. 12, 13; Herodian, l. i, p. 29; Hist. August. p. 52. These baths were situated near the *Porta Capena*. See Nardini *Roma Antica*, p. 79.

flattered himself that the Romans, dazzled and CHAP.
amused by this apparent liberality, would be less IV.
affected by the bloody scenes which were daily
exhibited; that they would forget the death of
Byrrhus, a ~~senator whose~~ superior merit the
late emperor ~~had~~ granted one of his daughters; and
that they would forgive the execution of
~~Arrius Antoninus~~, the last representative of the
~~name and virtues of the Antonines.~~ The for-
mer, with more integrity than prudence, had
attempted to disclose, to his brother-in-law, the
true character of Cleander. An equitable sen-
tence pronounced by the latter, when proconsul
of Asia, against a worthless creature of the fa-
vourite, proved fatal to him.^a After the fall of
Perennis, the terrors of Commodus had, for a
short time, assumed the appearance of a return
to virtue. He repealed the most odious of his
acts, loaded his memory with the public execration,
and ascribed to the pernicious counsels of
that wicked minister, all the errors of his inex-
perienced youth. But his ~~repentance lasted only~~
~~thirty days;~~ and, under Cleander's tyranny, the
administration of Perennis was often regretted.

Pestilence and famine contributed to fill up the Sedition
measure of the calamities of Rome.^b The first and death
could be only imputed to the just indignation of ^{and death} Clean-
the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by ^{der.}
^{a. D. 189.} the riches and power of the minister, was con-

^a Hist. August. p. 48.

^b Herodian, l. i. p. 28; Dion, l. lxxii, p. 1215. The latter says, that two thousand persons died every day at Rome, during a consider-
able length of time.

CHAP. sidered as the immediate cause of the second.

IV. The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers, broke out in the assembled circus. The people quitted their favourite amusements, for the more delicious pleasure of revenge, rushed in crowds towards a palace in the suburbs, one of the emperor's retirements, and demanded, with angry clamours, the head of the public enemy. Cleander, who commanded the praetorian guards,^c ordered his troops to sally forth and disperse the seditious multitude. The multitude fled with precipitation towards the city; several were slain, and many more were trampled to death: but when the cavalry entered the streets, their pursuit was checked by a shower of stones and darts from the roofs and windows of the houses. The foot guards,^d who had been long jealous of the prerogatives and insolence of the praetorian cavalry, embraced the party of the people. The tumult became a regular engagement, and threatened a general massacre. The praetorians at length gave way, oppressed with numbers; and the tide of popular fury re-

^c *Tuncque peditum tres praefecti praetorio suere: inter quos liberum.* From some remains of modesty, Cleander declined the title, whilst he assumed the powers of praetorian prefect. As the other freedmen were styled, from their several departments, *a vestarius ab epistolis*, Cleander called himself a *pugione*, as intrusted with the defence of his master's person. Salmasius and Casaubon seem to have talked very idly upon this passage.

^d *Os των πόλεων κτιζομένων.* Herodotus, v. 1, p. 31. It is doubtful whether he means the praetorian infantry, or the cohortes infanterie, a body of six thousand men, but whose rank and discipline were not equal to their numbers. Neither Tillemont nor Wetton chuse to decide this question.

turned with redoubled violence against the gates of the palace, where Commodus lay, dissolved in luxury, and alone: unconscious of the civil war. It was death to approach his person with the unwelcome news. ~~He could have perished in this supine security;~~ had not two women, his elder sister Fausta, and Marcia, the most favoured of his concubines, ventured to break into his presence. Bathed in tears, and with dishevelled hair, they threw themselves at his feet; and with all the pressing eloquence of fear, discovered to the affrighted emperor the crimes of the minister, the rage of the people, and the impending ruin which, in a few minutes, would burst over his palace and person. Commodus started from his dream of pleasure, and commanded that the head of Cleander should be thrown out to the people. The desired spectacle instantly appeased the tumult; and the son of Marcus might even yet have regained the affection and confidence of his subjects.

But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus. Whilst he thus abandoned the reins of empire to these unworthy favourites, he valued nothing in sovereign power, except the unbounded licence of indulging his sensual appetites. His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women, and as many boys, of every rank, and of every province; and, wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had

Dissolute
pleasures
of Com-
modus.

* Dion Cassius, L. Exxii, p. 1215; Herodian, L. i, p. 32; Hist. August. p. 48.

CHAP. recourse to violence. The ancient historians
 IV. have expatiated on these abandoned scenes of
 prostitution, which scorned every restraint of
 nature or modesty; but it would not be easy to
 translate their too faithful descriptions into the
 decency of modern language. The intervals of
 lust were filled up with the basest amusements.
 His ignorance and low sports. The influence of a polite age, and the labour of
 an attentive education, had never been able to
 infuse into his rude and brutish mind the least
 tincture of learning; and he was the first of the
 Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the
 pleasures of the understanding. Nero himself
 excelled, or affected to excel, in the elegant arts
 of music and poetry; nor should we despise his
 pursuits, had he not converted the pleasing relax-
 ation of a leisure hour into the serious business and
 ambition of his life. But Commodus, from his
 earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to what-
 ever was rational or liberal, and a fond attach-
 ment to the amusements of the populace; the
 sports of the circus and amphitheatre, the com-
 bates of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts.
 The masters in every branch of learning, whom
 Marcus provided for his son, were heard with
 inattention and disgust; whilst the Moors and
 Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin
 and to shoot with the bow, found a disciple who
 delighted in his application, and soon equalled

¹ Seroribus suis constrictis. Ipsas concubinas suas sub oculis
 suis stuprari juberet. Nec irruentum in se juvenum carebat infamia,
 omni parte corporis atque ore in sexum utrumque possitus. Hist.
 Aug. p. 47.

the most skilful of his instructors, in the steadiness of the eye, and the dexterity of the hand. CHAR.
IV.

The servile crowd, whose fortune depended on their master's vices, applauded these ignoble pursuits. Hunting
of wild
beasts.

The perfidious voice of flattery reminded him, that by exploits of the same nature, by the defeat of the Nemean lion, and the slaughter of the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Grecian Hercules had acquired a place among the gods, and an immortal memory among men. They only forgot to observe, that, in the first ages of society, when the fiercer animals often dispute with man the possession of an unsettled country, a successful war against those savages is one of the most innocent and beneficial labours of heroism. In the civilized state of the Roman empire, the wild beasts had long since retired from the face of man, and the neighbourhood of populous cities. To surprise them in their solitary haunts, and to transport them to Rome, that they might be slain in pomp by the hand of an emperor, was an enterprise equally ridiculous for the prince, and oppressive for the people. Ignorant of these distinctions, Commodus eagerly embraced the glorious resemblance, and styled himself (as we

* The African lions, when pressed by hunger, infested the open villages and cultivated country ; and they infested them with impunity. The royal beast was reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital ; and the unfortunate peasant who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty. This extraordinary game-law was mitigated by Honorius, and finally repealed by Justinian. Codex Theodos. tom. v, p. 92, et Comment. Gothofred.

CHAP. still read on his medals^h) the *Roman Hercules*.

IV. The club and the lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne, amongst the ensigns of sovereignty; and statues were erected, in which Commodus was represented in the character, and with the attributes of the god, whose valour and dexterity he endeavoured to emulate in the daily course of his ferocious amusements.ⁱ

Commodus Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the

the amphitheatre. Roman people, those exercises, which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace, and to the presence of a few favourites. On the appointed day, the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity, attracted to the amphitheatre an innumerable multitude of spectators; and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed on the uncommon skill of the imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows whose point was shaped into the form of a crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career, and cut asunder the long bony neck of the ostrich.^k A panther was let loose; and the archer waited till he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropt dead, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the

^h Spanheim de Numismat. Dissertat. xii. tom. ii. p. 493.

ⁱ Dion, l. lxxij. p. 1216. Hist. August. p. 49.

^k The ostrich's neck is three feet long, and composed of seventeen vertebrae. See Buffon, Hist. Naturelle.

amphitheatre disgorged at once a hundred lions; ^{CHAR.}
 a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Com-
 modus laid them dead as they ran raging round
 the arena. Neither the huge bulk of the ele-
 phant, nor the ~~whole~~ hide of the rhinoceros could
 defend them from his stroke. Ethiopia and
 India yielded their most extraordinary produc-
 tions; and several animals were slain in the am-
 phitheatre, which had been seen only in the re-
 presentations of art, or perhaps of fancy.^m In
 all these exhibitions, the securest precautions
 were used to protect the person of the Roman
 Hercules from the desperate spring of any savage,
 who might possibly disregard the dignity of the
 emperor, and the sanctity of the god.ⁿ

But the meanest of the populace were affected ^{Acts as a}
 with shame and indignation when they beheld ^{gladiator.}
 their sovereign enter the lists as a gladiator, and
 glory in a profession which the laws and manners
 of the Romans had branded with the justest note
 of infamy.^o He chose the habit and arms of

^l Commodus killed a camelopardalis or giraffe (Giraffa camelopardalis, p. 171), the tallest, the most gentle, and the most useless of the large quadrupeds. This singular animal, a native only of the interior parts of Africa, has not been seen in Europe since the revival of letters; and though M. de Buffon (Hist. Naturelle, tom. xiii) has endeavoured to describe, he has not ventured to delineate, the giraffe.

^m Herodian, I. i, p. 37. Hist. August. p. 50.

ⁿ The virtuous, and even the wise, princes forbade the senators and knights to embrace this scandalous profession, under pain of infamy, or, what was more dreaded by those profligate wretches, of exilia. The tyrants allure them to dishonour by threats and rewards. Nero once produced, in the arena, forty senators and sixty knights. See Lipsius, Saturnalia, I. ii, c. 2. He has happily corrected a passage of Suetonius, in Nerone, c. 12.

CHAP. the *secutor*, whose combat with the *retiarius*
 IV. formed one of the most lively scenes in the
 bloody sports of the amphitheatre. The *secutor*
 was armed with an helmet, sword, and buckler;
 his naked antagonist had only a large net and a
 trident; with the one he endeavoured to entangle,
 with the other to dispatch, his enemy. If he
 missed the first throw, he was obliged to fly
 from the pursuit of the *secutor*, till he had pre-
 pared his net for a second cast.⁸ The emperor
 fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-
 five several times. These glorious achievements
 were carefully recorded in the public acts of the
 empire; and that he might omit no circumstance
 of infamy, he received from the common fund
 of gladiators, a stipend so exorbitant, that it
 became a new and most ignominious tax upon the
 Roman people.⁹ It may be easily supposed, that
 in these engagements the master of the world
 was always successful: in the amphitheatre his
 victories were not often sanguinary; but when he
 exercised his skill in the school of gladiators, or
 his own palace, his wretched antagonists were
 frequently honoured with a mortal wound from
 the hand of Commodus, and obliged to seal their
 flattery with their blood.¹⁰ He now disdained
 the appellation of Hercules. The name of Pau-
 lus, a celebrated *secutor*, was the only one which

This infamy
and extra-
vagance.

⁸ Lipsius, L ii, c. 7, 8. Juvenal, in the eighth satire, gives a picturesque description of this combat.

⁹ Hist. August. p. 50. Dion, L Ixxii, p. 1220. He received for each time, *decies*, about £8000 sterling.

¹⁰ Victor tells us, that Commodus only allowed his antagonists a leaden weapon, dreading most probably the consequences of their despair.

delighted his ear. It was inscribed on his colossal statues, and repeated in the redoubled acclamations^{IV.} of the mournful and applauding senate.¹ Claudius Pompeianus, the virtuous husband of Lucilla, was the only senator who asserted the honour of his rank.² As a father, he permitted his sons to consult their safety by attending the amphitheatre.³ As a Roman, he declared, that his own life was in the emperor's hands; but that he would never behold the son of Marcus prostituting his person and dignity. Notwithstanding his manly resolution, Pompeianus escaped the resentment of the tyrant, and with his honour, had the good fortune to preserve his life.⁴

Commodus had now attained the summit of vice and infamy. Amidst the acclamations of a flattering court, he was unable to disguise, from himself, that he had deserved the contempt and hatred of every man of sense and virtue in his empire. His ferocious spirit was irritated by the consciousness of that hatred, by the envy of every kind of merit, by the just apprehension of danger, and by the habit of slaughter, which he contracted in his daily amusements. History

¹ They were obliged to repeat six hundred and twenty-six times, *Paulus, first of the sectors, &c.*

² Dion, l. lxxii, p. 1221. He speaks of his own baseness and danger.

³ He mixed, however, some prudence with his courage, and passed the greatest part of his time in a country retirement; alleging his advanced age, and the weakness of his eyes. "I never saw him in the *agitate*," says Dion, "except during the short reign of Pertinax." All his infirmities had suddenly left him, and they returned as suddenly upon the murder of that excellent prince. Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1227.

CHAP. has preserved a long list of consular senators ~~so~~
IV. ~~connected~~ to his wanton suspicion, which sought
~~down~~, with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate per-
~~sons~~ ~~of his~~ connected, however remotely, with the fa-
mily of the Antonines, without sparing even the
ministers of his crimes or pleasures.^a His cruelty
proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with
impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished
as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics.
Marcia his favourite chamberlain, Selectus his
chamberlain, and Laetus his praetorian prefect,
alarmed by the fate of their companions and
predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction
which every hour hung over their heads, either
from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the sud-
den indignation of the people. Marcia seized
the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to
her lover, after he had fatigued himself with
hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired
to sleep; but whilst he was labouring with the
effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth,
by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber,
and strangled him without resistance. The body
was secretly conveyed out of the palace, before
the least suspicion was entertained in the city, or
even in the mind of the emperor's death. Such
was the last companion of Marcus, and so easy
was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the arti-
ficial powers of government, had oppressed, dur-
ing thirteen years, so many millions of subjects.

Death of
Commo-
dus,
A. D. 192,
31st De-
cember.

^a The prefects were changed almost hourly or daily; and the ex-
price of Commodus was often fatal to his most favourite chamber-
lains. Hist. August. p. 46, 51.

each of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and personal abilities.⁴

IV.

Choice of
Pertinax
for empe-
ror.

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity which the gravity of the occasion required. They resolved ready to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whose character would justify and sustain the action that had been committed. They fixed on Pertinax, proconsul of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honours of the state. He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct.⁵ He now remained almost alone of

⁴ Dion, Lib. lvi, p. 1322. Herodian, 1 i, p. 43. Hist. August. p. 52.

⁵ Pertinax was a native of ~~Alba~~ Pompeia, in Piedmont, and son of a timber-merchant. The order of his employments (this is marked by Capitolinus) well deserves to be set down, as expressive of the form of government and manners of the age. 1. He was a centurion. 2. Prefect of a cohort in Syria, in the Parthian war, and in Britain. 3. He obtained an *ala*, or squadron of horse, in Maesia. 4. He was commissary of provisions on the Æmilian way. 5. He commanded the fleet upon the Rhine. 6. He was procurator of *Dacia*, with a salary of about £1600 a-year. 7. He commanded the veterans of a legion. 8. He obtained the rank of senator. 9. Of praetor. 10. With the command of the first legion in *Ebena* and *Norcium*. 11. He was consul about the year 175. 12. He marched *Marcus* into the east. 13. He commanded an army on the *Danube*. 14. He was consular legate of *Mæcia*. 15. Of *Dacia*. 16. Of *Syria*. 17. Of *Britain*. 18. He had the care of the public provisions

C H A P. the friends and ministers of Marcus; and when,
IV. at a late hour of the night, he was awakened
 with the news that the chamberlain and the pre-
 fect were at his door, he received them with in-
 trepid resignation, and desired they would exe-
 cute their master's orders. Instead of death,
 they offered him the throne of the Roman world.
 During some moments he distrusted their inten-
 tions and assurances. Convinced at length of
 the death of **Commodus**, he accepted the purple
 with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of
 his knowledge both of the duties and of the dan-
 gers of the supreme rank.²

He is ac-
 knowledg-
 ed by the
 praetorian
 guards;

Lætus conducted without delay his new em-
 peror to the camp of the praetorians, diffusing
 the same time through the city a seasonable re-
 port that Commodus died suddenly of an apo-
 plxy, and that the virtuous Pertinax had already
 succeeded to the throne. The guards were rather
 surprised than pleased with the suspicious death of
 a prince, whose indulgence and liberality they
 alone had experienced; but the emergency of the
 occasion, the authority of their prefect, the re-
 putation of Pertinax, and the clamours of the
 people, obliged them to stifle their secret discon-
 tents, to accept the donative promised of the new
 emperor, to swear allegiance to him, and with
 joyful acclamations and laurels in their hands to

at Rome. 19. He was proconsul of Africa. 20. Prefect of the
 city. Herodian (l. i. p. 48) does justice to his disinterested spirit;
 but Capitolinus, who collected every popular rumour, charges him
 with a great fortune, acquired by bribery and corruption.

² Julian, in the *Casars*, taxes him with being accessory to the
 death of Commodus.

conduct him to the senate-house, that the military ~~consent~~^{CHAP.} IV.
consent might be ratified by the civil authority.

This important night was now far spent; with and by the
the dawn of day, and the commencement of the ^{senate,}
new year, the ^{A. D. 193,} senators expected a summons to ^{1st Janu-}
attend an ~~important~~ ceremony. ^{ary.}

remonstrances, even of those of his creatures,
who yet preserved any regard for prudence or
decency, Commodus had resolved to pass the
night in the gladiator's school, and from thence
to take possession of the consulship, in the habit
and with the attendance of that infamous crew.
On a sudden, before the break of day, the senate
was called together in the temple of Concord, to
meet the guards, and to ratify the election of a
new emperor. For a few minutes they sat in silent
suspense, doubtful of their unexpected deliver-
ance, and suspicious of the cruel artifices of Com-
modus; but when at length they were assured
that the tyrant was no more, they resigned them-
selves to all the transports of joy and indignation.
Pertinax, who modestly represented the mean-
ness of his extraction, and pointed out several
noble senators more deserving than himself of the
empire, was constrained by their dutiful violence
to ascend the throne, and received all the titles
of imperial power, confirmed by the most sin-
cere vows of fidelity. The memory of Com- <sup>The me-
mory of
Commodus</sup>
modus was branded with eternal infamy. ^{declared}
The names of tyrant, of gladiator, of public enemy, ^{infamous.}
resounded in every corner of the house. They
decreed, in tumultuous votes, that his honours

CHAP. IV. should be reversed, his titles erased from the public monuments, his statues thrown down, his body dragged with a hook into the stripping-room of the gladiators, to satiate the public fury; and they expressed some indignation against those officious servants who had already presumed to screen his remains from the justice of the senate. But Pertinax could not refuse those last rites to the memory of Marcus, and the tears of his first protector Claudio*s Pannonicus*, who lamented the cruel fate of his brother-in-law, and lamented still more that he had deserved it.*

Legal jurisdiction of the senate over the emperors.

These effusions of impotent rage against a dead emperor, whom the senate had flattered when alive with the most abject servility, betrayed a just but ungenerous spirit of revenge. The legality of these decrees was however supported by the principles of the imperial constitution. To censure, to depose, or to punish with death, the first magistrate of the republic, who had abused his delegated trust, was the ancient and undoubted prerogative of the Roman senate; but that feeble assembly was obliged to content itself with inflicting on a fallen tyrant that public justice, from which, during his life and reign, he had been shielded by the strong arm of military despotism.

* Capitolinus gives us the particulars of these tumultuary votes, which were moved by one senator, and repeated, or rather chanted, by the whole body. Hist. August. p. 52.

† The senate condemned Nero to be put to death more severely. Seuton. c. 49.

Pertinax found a nobler way of condemning ~~CHAR.~~
his predecessor's memory, by the contrast of his
own virtues with the vices of Commodus. On
the day of his accession, he resigned over to his
wife and son ~~all~~ ^{their} private fortune, that they
might have no pretexts to solicit favours at the
expense of the state. He refused to flatter the
vanity of the former with the title of Augusta;
~~and except~~ ^{and except} the inexperienced youth might be
ter by the rank of Cæsar. Accurately distin-
guishing between the duties of a parent and
those of a sovereign, he educated his son with a
severe simplicity, which, while it gave him no
assured prospect of the throne, might in time
have rendered him worthy of it. In public, the
behaviour of Pertinax was grave and affable.
He lived with the virtuous part of the senate
(and, in a private station, he had been acquaint-
ed with the true character of each individual),
without either pride or jealousy; considered them
as friends and companions, with whom he had
shared the dangers of the tyranny, and with
whom he wished to enjoy the security of the
present time. He very frequently invited them
to familiar entertainments, the frugality of which
was ridiculed by those who remembered and
regretted the luxurious prodigality of Com-
modus.^c

* Dion (l. lxxiii, p. 1229) speaks of these entertainments, as of
senators who had supped with the emperor. Capitolinus (Hist. Au-
gust., p. 68) like a slave, who had received his intelligence from one
of the schilions.

Virtues of
Pertinax

IV.

CHAP. IV. To heal, as far as it was possible, the wounds inflicted by the hand of tyranny, was the pleasing, but melancholy, task of Pertinax. The He endea-
vours to
reform the
state. innocent victims, who yet survived, were recalled from exile, released from prison, and restored to the full possession of their honours and fortunes. The unburied bodies of murdered senators (for the cruelty of Commodus endeavoured to extend itself beyond death) were deposited in the sepulchres of their ancestors; their memory was justified; and every consolation was bestowed on their ruined and afflicted families. Among these consolations, one of the most grateful was the punishment of the delators; the common enemies of their master, of virtue, and of their country. Yet even in the inquisition of these legal assassins, Pertinax proceeded with a steady temper, which gave every thing to justice, and nothing to popular prejudice and resentment.

His regu-
lations,

The finances of the state demanded the most vigilant care of the emperor. Though every measure of injustice and extortion had been adopted, which could collect the property of the subject into the coffers of the prince, the rapaciousness of Commodus had been so very inadequate to his extravagance, that, upon his death, no more than eight thousand pounds were found in the exhausted treasury, to defray the current expences of government, and to discharge the pressing demand of a liberal donative, which

* *Decies.* — The blameless economy of Pius left his successors a treasure of *vicies septies milliae*, above two-and-twenty millions ster-ling. Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1231.

the new emperor had been obliged to promise to the prætorian guards. Yet, under these distressed circumstances, Pertinax had the generous firmness to remit all the oppressive taxes invented by Commodus, and to cancel all the unjust claims of the treasury, declaring, in a decree of the senate, that he was better satisfied to administer “a poor republic with innocence, than to acquire riches by the ways of tyranny.” Honour.” Economy and industry he considered as the pure and genuine sources of wealth; and from them he ~~soon~~ derived a copious supply for the public necessities. The expence of the household was immediately reduced to one half. All the instruments of luxury, Pertinax exposed to public auction, gold and silver plate, chariots of a singular construction, a superfluous wardrobe of silk and embroidery, and a great number of beautiful slaves of both sexes; excepting only, with attentive humanity, those who were born in a state of freedom, and had been ravished from the arms of their ~~keeping~~ parents. At the same time that he obliged the former favourites of the tyrant to resign a part of their ill-gotten wealth, he satisfied the just creditors of the state, and unexpectedly discharged the long arrears of honest services. He removed the oppressive restrictions which had been laid upon commerce, and granted all the uncultivated

* Besides the design of converting these useless ornaments into money, Dion (l. lxxiiii, p. 1229) assigns two secret motives of Pertinax. He wished to expose the vices of Commodus, and to discover by the purchasers those who most resembled him.

CHAP. IV. lands in Italy and the provinces, to those who would improve them; with an exemption from tribute, during the term of ten years.⁴

and popularity.

Such an uniform conduct had already secured to Pertinax the noblest reward of a sovereign, the love and esteem of his people. Those who remembered the virtues of Marcus, were happy to contemplate, in their new emperor, the features of that bright original, and flattered themselves, that they should long enjoy the benign influence of his administration. A hasty zeal to reform the corrupted state, accompanied with less prudence than might have been expected from the years and experience of Pertinax, proved fatal to himself and to his country. His honest indiscretion united against him the servile crowd, who found their private benefit in the public disorders, and who preferred the favour of a tyrant to the inexorable equality of the laws.⁵

Discontent
of the praetorians.

Amidst the general joy, the sullen and angry countenances of the praetorian guards betrayed their inward dissatisfaction. They had reluctantly submitted to Pertinax, they dreaded the strictness of the ancient discipline, which he was preparing to restore, and they regretted the licence of the former reign. Their discontents were secretly fomented by Lætus their prefect, who found, when it was too late, that his new emperor would reward a servant, but would not

⁴ Though Capitolinus has picked up many idle tales of the private life of Pertinax, he joins with Dion and Hierodian in admiring his public conduct.

⁵ *Leges rem surdum, inexorabilem esse.* T. Liv. ii. 3.

be ruled by a favourite. On the third day of his reign, the soldiers seized on a noble senator, with a design to carry him to the camp, and to invest him with the imperial purple. Instead of being dazzled by the dangerous honour, the delighted victim escaped from their violence, and took refuge at the feet of Pertinax. A short time afterwards Sosius Falco, one of the consuls of the year, ^{and youth,}^{but of no merit, and of an} eminent family, listened to the voice of ambition; and a conspiracy was formed during a short absence of Pertinax, which was crushed by his sudden return to Rome, and his absolute behaviour. Falco was on the point of being justly condemned to death as a public enemy, had he not been saved by the earnest and sincere entreaties of the injured emperor, who conjured the senate, that the purity of his reign might not be stained by the blood even of a guilty senator.

A conspiracy prevented.

These disappointments served only to irritate the rage of the pretorian guards. On the twenty-eighth of March, eighty-six days ^{only} after the death of Commodus, a general sedition broke out in the camp, which the officers wanted either ~~power~~ or inclination to suppress. Two or three hundred of the most desperate soldiers marched at noon-day with arms in their hands and fury in their looks, towards the imperial palace. The gates were thrown open by their companions.

Murder of
Pertinax
by the
pretori-
ans,
A. D. 193,
March
28th.

* If we credit Capitolinus (which is rather difficult), Falco behaved with the most petulant indecency to Pertinax, on the day of his accession. The wise emperor only admonished him of his youth and inexperience. Hist. August. p. 55.

CHAP. IV. upon guard; and by the domestics of the old court, who had already formed a secret conspiracy against the life of the too virtuous emperor. On the news of their approach, Pertinax, disdaining either flight or concealment, advanced to meet his assassins; and recalled to their minds his own innocence, and the sanctity of their recent oath. For a few moments they stood in silent suspense, ashamed of their atrocious design, and awed by the venerable aspect and majestic firmness of their sovereign, till at length the despair of pardon reviving their fury, a barbarian of the country of Tongres¹ levelled the first blow against Pertinax, who was instantly dispatched with a multitude of wounds. His head, separated from his body, and placed on a lance, was carried in triumph to the praetorian camp, in the sight of a modirful and indignant people, who lamented the unworthy fate of that excellent prince, and the transient blessings of a reign, the memory of which could serve only to aggravate their approaching misfortunes.^x

¹ The modern bishopric of Liege. This soldier probably belonged to the Batavian horse-guards, who were mostly raised in the duchy of Gueldres, and the neighbourhood, and were distinguished by their valour, and by the boldness with which they swam their horses across the broadest and most rapid rivers. Tacit. Hist. iv, 12. Dion, l. iv, p. 797. Lipsius de magnitudine Romanâ, l. i, c. 4.

^x Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1232. Herodian, l. ii, p. 60. Hist. August. p. 58. Victor in Epitom. et in Cœsarib. Eutropius, viii, 16.

CHAP. V.

Public sale of the empire to Didius Julianus by the praetorian guards.—Clodius Albinus in Britain; Pescennius Niger in Syria, and Septimius Severus in Pannonia, declare against the murderers of Pertinax.—Civil war and victory of Severus over his three rivals.—Relaxation of discipline.—New maxims of government.

THE power of the army is more sensibly felt in an extensive monarchy, than in a small community. * It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness. But although this relative proportion may be uniform, the influence of the army over the rest of the society will vary according to the degree of its positive strength. The advantages of military science and discipline cannot be exerted, unless a proper number of soldiers are united into one body, and actuated by one soul. With a handful of men, such an union would be ineffectual; with an unwieldy host, it would be impracticable; and the powers of the machine would be alike destroyed by the extreme minuteness, or the excessive weight, of its springs. To illustrate this observation, we need only reflect, that there is no superiority of natural strength, artificial weapons, or acquired skill, which could

C H A P.
V.Proportion
of the mili-
tary force,
to the num-
ber of the
people.

CHAP. enable one man to keep in constant subjection
 V. one hundred of his fellow-creatures: the tyrant
 of a single town, or a small district, would soon
 discover that an hundred armed followers were a
 weak defence against ten thousand peasants or ci-
 tizens; but an hundred thousand well-disciplined
 soldiers will command, with despotic sway, ten
 millions of subjects; and a body of ten or fifteen
 thousand guards will strike terror into the most
 numerous populace that ever crowded the streets
 of an immense capital.

The praetorian guards.

Their in-
stitution.

The prætorian bands, whose licentious fury
 was the first symptom and cause of the decline
 of the Roman empire, scarcely amounted to the last
 mentioned number.* They derived their in-
 institution from Augustus. That crafty tyrant, sensi-
 ble that laws might colour, but that arms
 alone could maintain, his usurped dominion, had
 gradually formed this powerful body of guards,
 in constant readiness to protect his person, to
 awe the senate, and either to prevent or to crush
 the first motions of rebellion. He distinguished
 these favoured troops by a double pay, and su-
 perior privileges; but, as their formidable aspect
 would at once have alarmed and irritated the
 Roman people, three cohorts only were stationed
 in the capital; whilst the remainder was dis-

* They were originally nine or ten thousand men (for Tacitus and Dion are not agreed upon the subject), divided into as many cohorts. Vitellius increased them to sixteen thousand, and, as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterwards sank much below that number. See Lipsius de magnitudine Romana, i. 4.

posed in the adjacent towns of Italy.³ But CHAP. after fifty years of peace and servitude, Tiberius ventured on a decisive measure, which for ever riveted the fetters of his country. Under the fair pretences of removing Italy from the heavy burthen of military quarters, and of introducing a strict discipline among the guards, he assembled them at Rome, in a permanent camp,^{v.} Their camp. which was situated with skill and care, and placed on a commanding situation.⁴

Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fail, to the strength of despotism. By thus introducing the pretorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperor taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe, which distance only, and mystery, can preserve, towards an imaginary power. In the luxurious idleness of an opulent city, their pride was nourished by the sense of their irresistible weight; nor was it possible to conceal from them, that the persons of the sovereign, the authority of the senate, the public treasure, and the seat of empire, were all

³ Sueton. in August.

⁴ Tacit. Annal. iv, 2. Sueton. in Tiber. c. 37. Dion Cassius, l. lvii, p. 867.

⁵ In the civil war between Vitellius and Vespasian, the pretorian camp was attacked and defended with all the machines used in the siege of the best fortified cities. Tacit. Hist. iii, 84.

⁶ Opposite to the walls of the city, on the broad summit of the Quirinal and Viminal hills. See Nardini Roma Antica, p. 174. Donatus de Roma Antica, p. 46.



CHAP. V. in their hands. To divert the praetorian bands from these dangerous reflections, the firmest and best-established princes were obliged to mix blandishments with commands, rewards with punishments, to flatter their pride, indulge their pleasures, connive at their irregularities, and to purchase their precarious faith by a liberal donative, which, since the elevation of *Claudius*, was exacted as a legal claim, on the accession of every new emperor.

Their specious claims.;

The advocates of the guards endeavoured to justify by arguments, the power which they asserted by arms; and to maintain that, according to the purest principles of the constitution, their consent was essentially necessary in the appointment of an emperor. The election of consuls, of generals, and of magistrates, however it had been recently usurped by the senate, was the ancient and undoubted right of the Roman people.¹ But where was the Roman people to be found? Not surely amongst the mixed multitude of slaves and strangers that filled the streets of Rome; a servile populace, as devoid of spirit as destitute of property. The defenders of the state,

¹ *Claudius*, raised by the soldiers to the empire, was the first who gave a donative. He gave *quina dena*, £120 (Sueton. in *Claud.* c. 10): when *Marcus*, with his colleague *Lucius Verus*, took quiet possession of the throne, he gave *vicena*, £160, to each of the guards. Hist. August. p. 25. (Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1231). We may form some idea of the amount of these sums, by Hadrian's complaint, that the promotion of a *Cæsar* had cost him ~~one million~~, two millions and a half sterling.

² *Cicero de Legibus*, iii. 5. The first book of *Livy*, and the second of *Dionysius of Halicarnassus*, shew the authority of the people, even in the election of the kings.

selected from the flower of the Italian youth,⁵ ~~CHAR~~
 and trained in the exercise of arms and virtue,^{V.}
 were the genuine representatives of the people,
 and the best entitled to elect the military chief of
 the republic. These ~~selections~~, however defective
 in reason, became unanswerable, when the ~~same~~
 prætorians increased their weight, by throwing,
 like the barbarian conqueror of Rome, their
 swords into the scale.⁶

The prætorians had violated the sanctity of ^{They offer} the empire^{to sale.}
 the throne, by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it, by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, for even the prefect ~~Latus~~, who had excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax. Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the impetuous dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend a throne polluted with the

⁵ They were originally recruited in Latium, Etruria, and the old colonies (Tacit. Annal. iv, 5). The emperor Otho complimented their vanity, with the flattering titles of Italizæ Alumni, Romanae vere juvenes. Tacit. Hist. i, 84.

⁶ In the siege of Rome by the Gauls. See Livy, v, 48. Plutarch, in Camill. p. 143.

CHAP. V.
of so near a relation, and so excellent a prince. He had already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the praetorians, apprehensive that, in this private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts, and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction.¹

It is purchased by Julian,
A. D. 193,
March 28.

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused an universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, who, regardless of the public calamities, was indulging himself in the luxury of the table.² His wife and his daughter, his freedmen and his parasites, easily convinced him that he deserved the throne, and earnestly conjured him to embrace so fortunate an opportunity. The vain old man hastened to the praetorian camp, where Sulpicianus was still in treaty with the guards; and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the

¹ Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1234. Herodian, l. ii, p. 63. Hist. August. p. 60. Though the three historians agree that it was in fact an auction, Herodian alone affirms that it was proclaimed as such by the soldiers.

² Spartianus softens the most odious parts of the character, and elevation of Julian.

offers of his rival. Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.

It was now incumbent on the praetorians to fulfil the conditions of the sale. They placed Julian in their new sovereign, whom they served and despised, in the centre of their ranks, surrounded him on every side with their shields, and conducted him in close order of battle through the deserted streets of the city. The senate was commanded to assemble; and those who had been the distinguished friends of Pertinax, or the personal enemies of Julian, found it necessary to affect a more than common share of indifference at this happy revolution.^m After Julian had filled the senate-house with armed soldiers, he extenuated on the freedom of his election, his own eminent virtues, and his full assurance of the affections of the senate. The obsequious assembly congratulated their own and the public felicity; engaged their allegiance, and conferred on him all the several branches of the imperial

^{v.}
Julian is
acknow-
ledged by
the senate.

^m Dion Cassius, at that time prætor, had been a personal enemy to Julian, l. lxxii, p. 1135.

CHAP. power. From the senate Julian was conducted, V. by the same military procession, to take possession of the palace. The first objects that struck his eyes, were the abandoned trunk of Pertinax, and the frugal entertainment prepared for his supper. The one he viewed with indifference, the other with contempt. A magnificent feast was prepared by his order, and he amused himself till a very late hour, with dice, and the performances of Pylades, a celebrated dancer. Yet it was observed, that after the crowd of flatterers dispersed, and left him to darkness, solitude, and terrible reflection, he passed a sleepless night, revolving most probably in his mind his own rash folly, the fate of his virtuous predecessor, and the doubtful and dangerous tenure of the empire, which had not been acquired by merit, but purchased by money.²

He public discontent. He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name. The nobility, whose conspicuous station and ample possessions exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected

* Hist. August. p. 61. We learn from thence one curious circumstance, that the new emperor, whatever had been his birth, was immediately aggregated to the number of patrician families.

* Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 123. Hist. August. p. 61. I have endeavoured to blend into one consistent story the seeming contradictions of the two writers.

civility of the emperor with smiles of complacency, and professions of duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The streets and public places of Rome resounded with clamours and imprecations. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and, conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire.

The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire. The armies of Britain, of Syria, and of Illyricum, lamented the death of Pertinax, in whose company, or under whose command, they had so often fought and conquered. They received with surprise, with indignation, and perhaps with envy, the extraordinary intelligence, that the praetorians had disposed of the empire by public auction; and they sternly refused to ratify the ignominious bargain. Their immediate and unanimous revolt was fatal to Julian, but it was fatal, at the same time, to the public peace; as the generals of the respective armies, Clodius Albinus, Pescennius Niger, and Septimius Severus, were still more anxious to succeed than to revenge the murdered Pertinax. Their forces were exactly balanced. Each of them was at the head of three legions,^p with a numerous train of auxiliaries; and, however different in their

CHAP.
V.

The armies
of Britain,
Syria, and
Pannonia,
declare
against
Julian.

CHAP. character; they were all soldiers of experience
V. and capacity.

Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, surpassed both his competitors in the nobility of his extraction, which he derived from some of the most illustrious names of the old republic. But the branch from whence he claimed his descent, was sunk into mean circumstances, and transplanted into a remote province. It is difficult to form a just judgment of his true character. Under the philosophic cloak of austerity, he stands accused of concealing most of the vices which degrade human nature.⁴ But his accusers are those venal writers who adored the fortune of Severus, and trampled on the ashes of an unsuccessful rival. Virtue, or the appearance of virtue, recommended Albinus to the confidence and good opinion of Marcus; and his preserving with the son the same interest which he had acquired with the father, is a proof at least that he was possessed of a very flexible disposition. The favour of a tyrant does not always suppose a want of merit in the object of it; he may, without intending it, reward a man of worth and ability; or he may find such a man useful to his own service. It does not appear that Albinus served the son of Marcus, either as the minister of his cruelties, or even as the associate of his pleasures.

⁴ The Posthumian and the Cejonian, the former of whom was raised to the consulship in the fifth year after his institution.

⁵ Spartanus, in his undigested collections, mixes up all the virtues and all the vices that enter into the human composition, and bestows them on the wrong object. Such, indeed, are many of the characters in the Augustan history.

He was employed in a distant honourable command, when he received a confidential letter from the emperor, acquainting him of the treasonable designs of some discontented generals, and authorising him to declare himself the guardian and successor of the throne, by assuming the title and ensigns of Cæsar.^{*} The governor of Britain wisely declined the dangerous honour, which would have marked him for the jealousy, or involved him in the approaching ruin, of Commodus. He courted power by nobler, or, at least, by more specious means. On a premature report of the death of the emperor, he assembled his troops; and, in an eloquent discourse, deplored the inevitable mischiefs of despotism, described the happiness and glory which their ancestors had enjoyed under the consular government, and declared his firm resolution to reinstate the senate and people in their legal authority. This popular harangue was answered by the loud acclamations of the British legions, and received at Rome with a secret murmur of applause. Safe in the possession of this little world, and in the command of an army less distinguished indeed for discipline than for numbers and valour,^t Albinus braved the menaces of Commodus, maintained towards Pertinax a stately ambiguous reserve, and instantly declared against

^{*} Hist. August. p. 80, 84.

^t Pertinax, who governed Britain a few years before, had been left for dead, in a mutiny of the soldiers. Hist. August. p. 54. Yet they loved and regretted him; admirantibus eam virtutem cui ira sebantur.

CHAP. the usurpation of Julian. The convulsions of the
 V. capital added new weight to his sentiments, or
 rather to his professions of patriotism. A regard
 to decency induced him to decline the lofty titles
 of Augustus and emperor; and he imitated per-
 haps the example of Galba, who, on a similar
 occasion, had styled himself the lieutenant of
 the senate and people.^u

Pescennius Niger in Syria. Personal merit alone had raised Pescennius Niger, from an obscure birth and station, to the government of Syria; a lucrative and important command, which, in times of civil confusion, gave him a near prospect of the throne. Yet his parts seem to have been better suited to the second than to the first rank; he was an unequal rival, though he might have approved himself an excellent lieutenant, to Severus, who afterwards displayed the greatness of his mind by adopting several useful institutions from a vanquished enemy.^x In his government, Niger acquired the esteem of the soldiers, and the love of the provincials. His rigid discipline fortified the valour, and confirmed the obedience of the former, whilst the voluptuous Syrians were less delighted with the mild firmness of his administration, than with the affability of his manners, and the apparent pleasure with which he attended their frequent and pompous festivals.^y As soon as the intel-

^u Sueton. in Galb. c. 10.

^x Hist. August. p. 76.

^y Herod. i. ii., p. 68. The chronicle of John Malala, of Antioch, shews the zealous attachment of his countrymen to these festivals, which at once gratified their superstition, and their love of pleasure.

ligence of the atrocious murder of Pertinax had reached Antioch, the wishes of Asia invited Niger to assume the imperial purple, and revenge his death. The legions of the eastern frontier embraced his cause; the opulent but unarmed provinces from the frontiers of Ethiopia^{*} to the Hadriatic, cheerfully submitted to his power; and the kings beyond the Tigris and the Euphrates congratulated his election, and offered him their homage and services. The mind of Niger was not capable of receiving this sudden tide of fortune; he flattered himself that his accession would be undisturbed by competition, and unstained by civil blood; and whilst he enjoyed the vain pomp of triumph, he neglected to secure the means of victory. Instead of entering into an effectual negociation with the powerful armies of the West, whose resolution might decide, or at least must balance, the mighty contest; instead of advancing without delay towards Rome and Italy, where his presence was impatiently expected,^a Niger trifled away, in the luxury of Antioch, those irretrievable moments which were diligently improved by the decisive activity of Severus.

* A king of Thebes, in Egypt, is mentioned in the Augustan history as an ally, and, indeed, as a personal friend, of Niger. If Spartianus is not, as I strongly suspect, mistaken, he has brought to light a dynasty of tributary princes totally unknown to history.

^a Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1238. Herod. l. ii, p. 67. A verse in every one's mouth at that time, seems to express the general opinion of the three rivals: Optimus est Niger, bonus Afer, pessimus Albinus. Hist. August. p. 75.

^b Herodian, l. ii, p. 71.

CHAP.

V.

Pannonia
and Dalmatia.

The country of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which occupied the space between the Danube and the Hadriatic, was one of the last and most difficult conquests of the Romans. In the defence of national freedom, two hundred thousand of these barbarians had once appeared in the field, alarmed the declining age of Augustus, and exercised the vigilant prudence of Tiberius at the head of the collected force of the empire.^c The Pannonians yielded at length to the arms and institutions of Rome. Their recent subjection, however, the neighbourhood, and even the mixture of the unconquered tribes, and perhaps the climate, adapted, as it has been observed, to the production of great bodies and slow minds,^d all contributed to preserve some remains of their original ferocity, and under the tame and uniform countenance of Roman provincials, the hardy features of the natives were still to be discerned. Their warlike youth afforded an inexhaustible supply of recruits to the legions stationed on the banks of the Danube, and which, from a perpetual warfare against the Germans and Sarmatians, were deservedly esteemed the best troops in the service.

Septimius
severus.

The Pannonian army was at this time commanded by Septimius Severus, a native of Africa, who, in the gradual ascent of private honours, had concealed his daring ambition, which was

^c See an account of that memorable war in Velleius Paternius, ii, 110, &c. who served in the army of Tiberius.

^d Such is the reflection of Herodian, i. ii, p. 74. Will the modern Austrians allow the influence?

never diverted from its steady course by the allurements of pleasure, the apprehension of danger, or the feelings of humanity.⁴ On the first news of the murder of Pertinax, he assembled his troops, painted in the most lively colours the crime, the insolence, and the weakness of the pretorian guards, and animated the legions to arms and to revenge.⁵ He concluded (and the peroration was thought extremely eloquent) with promising every soldier about four hundred pounds; an honourable donative, double in value to the infamous bribe with which Julian had purchased the empire.⁶ The acclamations of the army immediately saluted Severus with the names of Augustus, Pertinax, and emperor;⁷ and he thus attained the lofty station to which he was invited, by conscious merit and a long train of dreams and omens, the fruitful offspring either of his superstition or policy.⁸

The new candidate for empire saw and improved the peculiar advantage of his situation. His province extended to the Julian Alps, which

⁴ In the letter to Albinus, already mentioned, Commodus accuses Severus, as one of the ambitious generals who censured his conduct, and wished to occupy his place. Hist. August. p. 80.

⁵ Pannonia was too poor to supply such a sum. It was probably promised in the camp, and paid at Rome, after the victory. In fixing the sum, I have adopted the conjecture of Causabon. See Hist. August. p. 66. Comment. p. 115.

⁶ Herodian, l. ii, p. 78. Severus was declared emperor on the banks of the Danube, either at Carnuntum, according to Spartianus (Hist. August. p. 65), or else at Sabaria, according to Victor. Mr. Hume, in supposing that the birth and dignity of Severus were too much inferior to the imperial crown, and that he marched into Italy as general only, has not considered this transaction with his usual accuracy (Essay on the original contract).

CHAP. gave an easy access into Italy; and he remembered the saying of Augustus, that a Pannonian army might in ten days appear in sight of Rome.^b

Marches into Italy. By a celerity proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, he might reasonably hope to revenge Pertinax, punish Julian, and receive the homage of the senate and people, as their lawful emperor, before his competitors, separated from Italy by an immense tract of sea and land, were apprised of his success, or even of his election. During the whole expedition he scarcely allowed himself any moments for sleep or food; marching on foot, and in complete armour, at the head of his columns, he insinuated himself into the confidence and affection of his troops, pressed their diligence, revived their spirits, animated their hopes, and was well satisfied to share the hardships of the meanest soldier, whilst he kept in view the infinite superiority of his reward.

Advances towards Rome.

The wretched Julian had expected, and thought himself prepared to dispute the empire with the governor of Syria; but in the invincible and rapid approach of the Pannonian legions, he saw his inevitable ruin. The hasty arrival of every messenger increased his just apprehensions. He was successively informed, that Severus had passed the Alps; that the Italian cities, unwilling or unable to oppose his progress, had received him with the warmest professions of joy and duty; that the

^b Velleius Paterculus, l. ii, c. 3. We must reckon the march from the nearest verge of Pannonia, and extend the sight of the city as far as two hundred miles.

important place of Ravenna had surrendered without resistance, and that the Adriatic fleet was in the hands of the conqueror. The enemy was now within two hundred and fifty miles of Rome; and every moment diminished the narrow span of life and empire allotted to Julian.

He attempted, however, to prevent, or at least to protract, his ruin. He implored the venal faith of the praetorians, filled the city with unavailing preparations for war, drew lines round the suburbs, and even strengthened the fortifications of the palace; as if those last entrenchments could be defended without hope of relief against a victorious invader. Fear and shame prevented the guards from deserting his standard; but they trembled at the name of the Pannonian legions, commanded by an experienced general, and accustomed to vanquish the barbarians on the frozen Danube.¹ They quitted, with a sigh, the pleasures of the baths and theatres, to put on arms, whose use they had almost forgotten, and beneath the weight of which they were oppressed. The unpractised elephants, whose uncouth appearance, it was hoped, would strike terror into the army of the North, threw their unskillful riders; and the awkward evolutions of the marines, drawn from the fleet of Misenum, were an object of ridicule to the populace; whilst the senate enjoyed,

Distress of
Julian.

¹ This is not a puerile figure of rhetoric, but an allusion to a real fact, recorded by Dion, l. lxxi, p. 1181. It probably happened more than once.

CHAP. with secret pleasure, the distress and weakness
V. of the usurper.^{*}

^{His uncer-}
^{tain con-}
^{duct.} Every motion of Julian betrayed his trembling perplexity. He insisted that Severus should be declared a public enemy by the senate. He entreated that the Pannonian general might be associated to the empire. He sent public ambassadors of consular rank to negotiate with his rival; he dispatched private assassins to take away his life. He designed that the vestal virgins, and all the colleges of priests, in their sacerdotal habits, and bearing before them the sacred pledges of the Roman religion, should advance, in solemn procession, to meet the Pannonian legions; and, at the same time, he vainly tried to interrogate, or to appease, the fates, by magic ceremonies, and unlawful sacrifices.[†]

^{Is deserted}
^{by the pra-}
^{torians.} Severus, who dreaded neither his arms nor his enchantments, guarded himself from the only danger of secret conspiracy, by the faithful attendance of six hundred chosen men, who never quitted his person or their cuirasses, either by night or by day, during the whole march. Advancing with a steady and rapid course, he passed, without difficulty, the defiles of the Appenines, received into his party the troops and ambassadors, sent to retard his progress, and made a short halt at Interamnia, about seventy miles from

* Dion, l. Ixxiii, p. 1233. Herodian, l. ii, p. 81. There is no surer proof of the military skill of the Romans, than their first surmounting the idle terror, and afterwards disowning the dangerous use, of elephants in war.

† Hist. August. p. 62, 63.

Rome. His victory was already secure; but the despair of the prætorians might have rendered it bloody; and Severus had the laudable ambition of ascending the throne without drawing the sword.^m His ~~enemies~~ dispersed in the capital, assured the guards, that provided they would abandon their worthless prince, and the perpetrators of the murder of Pertinax to the justice of the conqueror, he would no longer consider that melancholy event as the act of the whole body. The faithless prætorians, whose resistance was supported only by sullen obstinacy, gladly complied with the easy conditions, seized the greatest part of the assassins, and signified to the senate, that they no longer defended the cause of Julian. That assembly, convoked by the consul, unanimously acknowledged Severus as lawful emperor, decreed divine honours to Pertinax, and pronounced a sentence of deposition and death against his unfortunate successor. Julian was conducted into a private apartment of the baths of the palace, and beheaded as a common criminal, after having purchased, with an immense treasure, an anxious and precarious reign of only sixty-six days.ⁿ The almost incredible expedition of Severus, who, in so short a space of time, conducted a numerous army from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tyber,

^m Victor and Eutropius, viii, 17, mention a combat near the Milian bridge, the Ponte Molle, unknown to the better and more ancient writers.

ⁿ Dion, l. lxxiii, p. 1240. Herodian, l. ii, p. 83. Hist. August, p. 63.

CHAP. proves at once the plenty of provisions produced
 V. by agriculture and commerce, the goodness of
 the roads, the discipline of the legions, and the
 indolent subdued temper of the provinces.^o

Disgrace of
the præ-
torian
guards.

The first cares of Severus were bestowed on two measures, the one dictated by policy, the other by decency; the revenge, and the honours, due to the memory of Pertinax. Before the new emperor entered Rome, he issued his commands to the prætorian guards, directing them to wait his arrival on a large plain near the city, without arms, but in the habits of ceremony in which they were accustomed to attend their sovereign. He was obeyed by those haughty troops, whose contrition was the effect of their just terrors. A chosen part of the Illyrian army encompassed them with levelled spears. Incapable of flight or resistance, they expected their fate in silent consternation. Severus mounted the tribunal, sternly reproached them with perfidy, and cowardice, dismissed them with ignominy from the trust which they had betrayed, despoiled them of their splendid ornaments, and banished them, on pain of death, to the distance of an hundred miles from the capital. During the transaction,

* From these sixty-six days we must first deduct sixteen, as Pertinax was murdered on the 28th of March, and Severus most probably elected on the 13th of April (see Hist. August. p. 65, and Tillemont, Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 393, note 7). We cannot allow less than ten days after his election, to put a numerous army in motion. Forty days remain for this rapid march; and as we may compute about eight hundred miles from Rome to the neighbourhood of Vienna, the army of Severus marched twenty miles every day, without halt or intermission.

another detachment had been sent to seize their CHAP:
arms, occupy their camp, and prevent the hasty
consequences of their despair.^{V.}

The funeral and consecration of Pertinax was next solemnized with every circumstance of sad magnificence.¹ The senate, with a melancholy pleasure, performed the last rites to that excellent prince, whom they had loved, and still regretted. The concern of his successor was probably less sincere. He esteemed the virtues of Pertinax, but those virtues would for ever have confined his ambition to a private station. Severus pronounced his funeral oration with studied eloquence, inward satisfaction, and well-acted sorrow; and, by this pious regard to his memory, convinced the credulous multitude that he alone was worthy to supply his place. Sensible, however, that arms, not ceremonies, must assert his claim to the empire, he left Rome at the end of thirty days, and without suffering himself to be elated by this easy victory, prepared to encounter his more formidable rivals.

The uncommon abilities and fortune of Severus, have induced an elegant historian to compare him with the first and greatest of the Cæsars.² The parallel is, at least, imperfect. Where shall we find, in the character of Severus, the commanding superiority of soul, the generous clemency, and the various genius, which could

¹ Dion, l. lxxiv, p. 1241. Herodian, l. ii, p. 84.

² Dion, (l. lxxiv, p. 1244) who assisted at the ceremony as a senator, gives a most pompous description of it.

Herodian, l. iii, p. 112.

CHAP. ^{V.} ~~reconcile~~ and unite the love of pleasure, the thirst of knowledge, and the fire of ambition?" In one instance only, they may be compared, with some degree of propriety, in the celerity of their motions, and their civil victories. In less than four years,<sup>A.D.
193-197.</sup> Severus subdued the riches of the east, and the valour of the west. He vanquished two competitors of reputation and ability, and defeated numerous armies, provided with weapons and discipline equal to his own. In that age, the art of fortification, and the principles of tactics, were well understood by all the Roman generals; and the constant superiority of Severus was that of an artist, who uses the same instruments with more skill and industry than his rivals. I shall not, however, enter into a minute narrative of these military operations; but as the two civil wars against Niger and against Albinus, were almost the same in their conduct, event, and consequences, I shall collect into one point of view, the most striking circumstances, tending to develope the character of the conqueror, and the state of the empire.

^{Conduct of} Falsehood and insincerity, unsuitable as they seem to the dignity of public transactions, offend

* Though it is not, ~~most~~ assuredly, the intention of Lucan, to ~~attack~~ the character of Cæsar, yet the idea he gives of that hero, in the tenth book of the Pharsalia, where he describes him, at the same time, making love to Cleopatra, sustaining a siege against the power of Egypt, and conversing with the sages of the country, is, in reality, the noblest panegyric.

^t Reckoning from his election, April 13, 193, to the death of Albinus, February 19, 197. See Tillemont's Chronology.

us with a less degrading idea of meanness, than CHAP.
 when they are found in the intercourse of pri- V.
 vate life. In the latter, they discover a want of
 courage; in the other, only a defect of power;
 and as it is impossible for the most able states-
 man to subdue millions of followers and enemies
 by their own personal strength, the world, under
 the name of policy, seems to have granted them
 a very liberal indulgence of craft and dissimu-
 lation. Yet the arts of Severus cannot be justi- Arts of
 fied by the most ample privileges of state reason.
 He promised; only to betray; he flattered, only
 to ruin; and however he might occasionally bind
 himself by oaths and treaties, his conscience, ob-
 sequious to his interest, always released him
 from the inconvenient obligation.^a

If his two competitors, reconciled by their towards
 common danger, had advanced upon him without Niger;
 delay, perhaps Severus would have sunk under
 their united effort. Had they even attacked
 him, at the same time, with separate views and
 separate armies, the contest might have been long
 and doubtful. But they fell, singly and success-
 sively, an easy prey to the arts as well as arms
 of their subtle enemy, lulled into security by the
 moderation of his professions, and overwhelmed
 by the rapidity of his action. He first marched
 against Niger, whose reputation and power he
 the most dreaded; but he declined any hostile
 declarations, suppressed the name of his antagon-
 ist, and only signified to the senate and people,

^a Herodian, I. ii, p. 85.

CHAP. his intention of regulating the eastern provinces.
 V. In private he spoke of Niger, his old friend and intended successor,^x with the most affectionate regard, and highly applauded his generous design of revenging the murder of Pertinax. To punish the vile usurper of the throne, was the duty of every Roman general. To persevere in arms, and to resist a lawful emperor, acknowledged by the senate, would alone render him criminal.^y The sons of Niger had fallen into his hands among the children of the provincial governors, detained at Rome as pledges for the loyalty of their parents.^z As long as the power of Niger inspired terror, or even respect, they were educated with the most tender care, with the children of Severus himself; but they were soon involved in their father's ruin, and removed, first by exile, and afterwards by death, from the eye of public compassion.^a

towards
Albinus. While Severus was engaged in his eastern war, he had reason to apprehend that the governor of Britain might pass the sea and the Alps, occupy the vacant seat of empire, and oppose his return

^x Whilst Severus was very dangerously ill, it was industriously given out, that he intended to appoint Niger and Albinus his successors. As he could not be sincere with respect to both, he might not be so with regard to either. Yet Severus carried his hypocrisy so far, as to profess that intention in the memoirs of his own life.

^y Hist. August. p. 65.

^z This practice, invented by Commodus, proved very useful to Severus. He found at Rome the children of many of the principal adherents of his rivals; and he employed them more than once to intimidate, or seduce, the parents.

^a Herodian, I. iii. p. 26. Hist. August. p. 67, 68.

with the authority of the senate and the forces of the west. The ambiguous conduct of Albinus, in not assuming the imperial title, left room for negotiation. Forgetting at once, his professions of patriotism, and the jealousy of sovereign power, he accepted the precarious rank of Caesar, as a reward for his fatal neutrality. Till the first contest was decided, Severus treated the man, whom he had doomed to destruction, with every mark of esteem and regard. Even in the letter, in which he announced his victory over Niger, he styles Albinus the brother of his soul and empire, sends him the affectionate salutations of his wife Julia, and his young family, and entreats him to preserve the armies and the republic faithful to their common interest. The messengers charged with this letter, were instructed to accost the Caesar with respect, to desire a private audience, and to plunge their daggers into his heart.¹ The conspiracy was discovered, and the too credulous Albinus at length passed over to the continent, and prepared for an unequal contest with his rival, who rushed upon him at the head of a veteran and victorious army.

The military labours of Severus seem inadequate to the importance of his conquests. Two engagements, the one near the Hellespont, the other in the narrow defiles of Cilicia, decided the fate of his Syrian competitor; and the troops of Europe asserted their usual ascendant over the ef-

¹ Hist. August. p. 84. Spartianus has inserted this curious letter at full length.

CHAP. feminata natives of Asia.^c The battle of Lyons,
 V. where one hundred and fifty thousand^d Romans
 were engaged, was equally fatal to Albinus. The
 valour of the British army maintained, indeed,
 a sharp and doubtful contest with the
 hardy discipline of the Illyrian legions. The
 fame and person of Severus appeared, during a
 few moments, irrecoverably lost, till that war-
 like prince rallied his fainting troops, and led
 them on to a decisive victory.^e The war was
 finished by that memorable day.

<sup>decided by
one or two
battles.</sup> The civil wars of modern Europe have been
 distinguished, not only by the fierce animosity,
 but likewise by the obstinate perseverance, of the
 contending factions. They have generally been
 justified by some principle, or, at least, coloured
 by some pretext, of religion, freedom, or loyalty.
 The leaders were nobles of independent property
 and hereditary influence. The troops fought
 like men interested in the decision of the quarrel;
 and as military spirit and party zeal were strongly
 diffused throughout the whole community, a van-
 quished chief was immediately supplied with new
 adherents, eager to shed their blood in the same
 cause. But the Romans, after the fall of the
 republic, combated only for the choice of masters.

^c Consult the third book of Herodian, and the seventy-fourth
 book of Dion Cassius.

^d Dion, l. lxxv, p. 1260.

^e Dion, l. lxxv, p. 1261. Herodian, l. iii, p. 110. Hist. Au-
 g., p. 68. The battle was fought in the plain of Trevoux, three
 or four leagues from Lyons. See Tillemont, tom. iii, p. 406.
 Note 1^a.

Under the standard of a popular candidate for CHAP. empire, a few enlisted from affection, some from fear, many from interest, none from principle. The legions, maintained by party need, were allured into civil war by liberal donatives and still more liberal promises. A defeat by discrediting the chieftain the performance of his engagements dissolved the monarchical allegiance of his followers, and left them to consult their own safety, by a timely desertion of an unsuccessful cause. It was of little moment to the provinces under whose sway they were oppressed or governed; they were driven by the impulsion of the present power, and as soon as that power yielded to a superior force, they hastened to implore the clemency of the conqueror, who, as he had an immense debt to discharge, was obliged to sacrifice the most guilty countries to the avarice of his soldiers. In the vast extent of the Roman empire, there were few fortified cities capable of protecting a routed army; nor was there any person, or family, or order of men, whose natural interest, unsupported by the prudence of government, was capable of restoring the cause of a sinking party.

Yet, in the contest between Niger and Seve- <sup>Siege of
Byzan-</sup>
rus, a single city deserves an honourable exception. As Byzantium was one of the greatest passages from Europe into Asia, it had been provided with a strong garrison, and a fleet of five

¹ Montesquieu, Considerations sur la Grandeur et la Décadence des Romains, &c. xii.

CHAP. hundred vessels was anchored in the harbour.
V. The impetuosity of Severus disappointed this
frustrated scheme of defence; he left to his genera-
rals the siege of Byzantium, forced the less
guarded passage of the Hellespont, and, impa-
tient of a meager enemy, pressed forward to en-
counter his rival. Byzantium, attacked by a nu-
merous and increasing army, and afterwards by
the whole naval power of the empire, sustained a
siege of three years, and remained faithful to the
name and memory of Niger. The citizens and
soldiers (we know not from what cause) were ani-
mated with equal fury; several of the principal
officers of Niger, who despaired of, or who dis-
dained a pardon, had thrown themselves into
this last refuge: the fortifications were esteemed
impregnable, and, in the defence of the place, a
celebrated engineer displayed all the mechanic
powers known to the ancients.¹ Byzantium at
length surrendered to famine. The magistrates
and soldiers were put to the sword, the walls de-
molished, the privileges suppressed, and the des-
tituted capital of the East subsisted only as an open
village, subject to the insulting jurisdiction of
Perinthus.² The historian Dion, who had ad-
mired the flourishing, and lamented the decadence,

Most of these, as may be supposed, were small open vessels: some, however, were galleys of two, and a few of three ranks of oars.

The engineer's name was Priscus. His skill saved his life, and he was taken into the service of the conqueror. For the particular conduct of the siege, consult Polybius (Hist. lxxv, p. 1251), and Herodotus (B. III, p. 205). For the theory of it, the fanciful chevalier de Polidor may be looked into. See Polybe, tom. I, p. 76.

state of Byzantium, accused the revenge of Se- CHAP.
verus, for depriving the Roman people of the
strongest bulwark against the barbarians of Pon-
tus and Asia. The truth of this observation was
but too well justified in the succeeding age, when
the Gothic fleet crossed the Euxine, and passed
through the undefended Bosphorus into the centre
of the Mediterranean.

Both Niger and Albinus were dismembered, and deaths of
put to death in their flight from the field. Niger and
battle. Their fate excited neither surprise nor
compassion. They had staked their lives against
the chance of empire, and suffered what they
would have inflicted; nor did Severus claim the
arrogant superiority of suffering his rivals to live
in a private station. But his unforbearing temper,
stimulated by avarice, indulged a spirit of re-
venge, where there was no room for apprehen-
sion. The most considerable of the provincials,
who, without any dislike to the fortunate candi-
date, had obeyed the governor under whose au-
thority they were accidentally placed, were pun-
ished by death, exile, and especially by the
confiscation of their estates. Many cities of the
East were stript of their ancient honours, and
obliged to pay, into the treasury of Severus, four
times the amount of the sums contributed by
them for the service of Niger.

¹ Notwithstanding the authority of Spartianus, and those writers of
Grecia, we may be assured from Dion and Herodian, that Byzantium,
many years after the death of Severus, lay in ruins.

² Dion, l. lxxiv, p. 1250.

CHAP. Till the final decision of the war, the cruelty
 V. of Severus was, in some measure, restrained by
 Animosity the uncertainty of the event, and his pretended
 of Severus reverence for the senate. The head of *Albinus*,
 against the accompanied with a menacing letter, announced
 senate. to the Romans, that he was resolved to spare
 none of the adherents of his unfortunate compe-
 titors. He was irritated by the just suspicion,
 that he had never possessed the affections of the
 senate, and he concealed his old malevolence
 under the recent discovery of some treasonable
 correspondences. Thirty-five senators, however,
 accused of having favoured the party of *Albinus*,
 he freely pardoned; and, by his subsequent be-
 haviour, endeavoured to convince them, that he
 had forgotten, as well as forgiven, their supposed
 offences. But, at the same time, he condemned
 forty-one other senators, whose names history
 has recorded, their wives, children, and clients,
 suspended them in death, and the nobles pro-
 vincials of Spain and Gaul were involved in the
 same ruin. Such rigid justice, for so he termed it,
 was, in the opinion of Severus, the only conduct
 capable of ensuring peace to the people, or
 fidelity to the prince; and he condescended slightly
 to lament, that, to be mild, it was necessary that
 he should first be cruel.¹

¹ Dion (L. lxxv, p. 1264); only twenty-nine senators are mentioned
 by him, but forty-one are named in the Augustan History, p. 65,
 among whom were six of the name of Severus. Aurelian (l. iii.,
 115), speaks in general of the severity of Severus.
 Aurelius Victor.

The true interest of an absolute monarch generally coincides with that of his people. Their numbers, their wealth, their order, and their security, are the best and only foundations of his real greatness. But he could be void of virtue, which might supply its place, and would dictate the same rule of conduct. Severus considered the Roman empire as his property, and had no sooner secured the possession, than he bestowed his care on the cultivation and improvement of so valuable an acquisition. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible firmness, soon corrected most of the abuses with which, since the death of Marcus, every part of the government had been infected. In the administration of justice, the judgments of the emperor were characterised by attention, discernment, and impartiality; and whenever he deviated from the strict line of equity, it was generally in favour of the poor and oppressed; not so much indeed from any sense of humanity, as from the natural propensity of a despotic master to the idea of greatness, and to sink all his subjects to the common level of absolute dependence. His expensive taste for building, magnificent shows, and above all a constant and liberal distribution of corn and provisions, were the surest means of captivating the affection of the Roman people.

^a Dion. l. lxvi, p. 1272. Hist. August. p. 67. He celebrated the secular games with extraordinary magnificence, and he left in the public granaries a provision of corn for seven years, at the rate of 75,000 modii, or about 2500 quarters per day. I am persuaded,

CHAP. V. The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated. The calm of peace and prosperity was once more experienced in the provinces; and many cities, restored by the munificence of Severus, assumed the title of his colonies, and attested by public monuments their gratitude and felicity.¹ The fame of the Roman arms was revived by the warlike and successful emperor,² and he boasted, with a just pride, that having received the empire oppressed with foreign and domestic wars, he left it established in profound, universal, and honourable peace.³

Relaxation of military discipline. Although the wounds of civil war appeared completely healed, its mortal poison still lurked in the vitals of the constitution. Severus possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability; but the daring soul of the first Cæsar, or the deep policy of Augustus, were scarcely equal to the task of curing the insolence of the victorious legions. By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline. The vanity of his

persuaded, that the granaries of Severus were supplied for a long term; but I am not less persuaded, that policy on the one hand, and admiration on the other, magnified the hoard far beyond its true contents.

¹ See Spanheim's treatise on ancient medals, the inscriptions, and our learned travellers Spörn and Wheeler, Shaw, Pocock, &c. who, in Africa, Greece, and Asia, have found more monuments of Severus, than of any other Roman emperor whatsoever.

² He carried his victorious arms to Selencia and Ctesiphon, the capitals of the Parthian monarchy. I shall have occasion to mention this war in its proper place.

³ *Sic in Britannia.* was his own just and emphatic expression. Hist. August. 73.

⁴ Herodian, I. iii. p. 115. Hist. August. p. 62.

soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters. He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and even claim, extraordinary demands on every occasion of danger or festivity. Finally, a species of luxury, and raised above the level of subjects by their numerous privileges,¹ they soon became incapable of military fatigue, oppressive to the country, and impatient of a just subordination. Their officers asserted the superiority of rank by a more profuse and elegant luxury. There is still extant a letter of Severus, lamenting the licentious state of the army, and exhorting one of his generals to begin the necessary reformation from the tribunes themselves; since, as he justly observes, the officer who has forfeited the esteem, will never command the obedience, of his soldiers.² Had the emperor pursued the train of reflection, he would have discovered that the primary cause of this general corruption, might be ascribed not indeed to the example, but to the pernicious indulgence, however, of the commander in chief.

The praetorians, who murdered their emperor and sold the empire, had received the just punishment of their treason; but the necessary

New estab-
lishment
of the
praetorian
guards.

¹ Upon the insolence and privileges of the soldiers, the 16th satire, falsely ascribed to Juvenal, may be consulted; the style and circumstances of it would induce me to believe, that it was composed under the reign of Severus, or that of his son.

² Hist. August. p. 73.

CHAP. though dangerous, institution of guards, was soon
 V. reured on a new model by Severus, and increased to four times the ancient number.¹ Formerly these troops had been recruited in Italy, and as the adjacent provinces gradually imbibed the softer manners of Rome, the levies were extended to Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. In the room of these elegant troops, better adapted to the pomp of courts than to the uses of war, was established by Severus, that from all the regions of the frontiers, the soldiers most distinguished for strength, valour, and fidelity, should be occasionally draughted; and promoted, as honour and reward, into the more eligible service of the guards.² By this new institution, the Italian youth were diverted from the exercise of arms, and the capital was terrified by the strange aspect and manners of a multitude of barbarians. But Severus flattered himself, that the legions would consider these chosen prætorians as the representatives of the whole military order, and that the present aid of fifty thousand men, superior in arms and appointments to any force that could be brought into the field against them, would for ever crush the hopes of rebellion, and secure the empire to himself and his posterity.

The office
of præ-
torian pre-
fect.

The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the prætorian prefect, who

¹ Tacit. Hist. 1. 26, p. 102.

² Dion, 1. Ixxiv, p. 1243.

in his origin had been a simple captain of the ~~guards~~^{V.} guards, was placed not only at the head of the army, but of the finances and even of the law. In every department of administration he represented the power, and exercised the authority, of the emperor. The first prefect who enjoyed and abusively immense power was Plautianus, the favorite minister of Severus. His reign lasted above ten years, till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the emperor, which seemed to assure his fortune, proved the occasion of his ruin. The animosities of the palace; by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to protract a revolution, and obliged the emperor, who still loved him, to consent with reluctance to his death. After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated Papinian, was appointed to execute the motley office of praetorian prefect.

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue, and even the good sense of the emperors had been distinguished by their zeal of almost reverent for the senate; and by a tender regard to the more refined of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in

³ One of his most daring and wanton acts of power, was the execution of an hundred free Romans, some of them married men, even fathers of families, merely that his daughter, on her marriage with the young emperor, might be attended by a train of ornaments worthy of an eastern queen. Dion, l. lxxvi, p. 1271.

⁴ Dion, l. lxxvi, p. 1274. Herodian, l. iii, p. 122-129. The grammarian of Alexandria seems, as it is not unusual, much better acquainted with this mysterious transaction, and more assured of the guilt of Plautianus, than the Roman senator ventures to be.

CHAP. V. the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving an intermediate power, however imaginary, between the emperor and the army. He despised to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person, and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands, where his request would have proved as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power.

New maxims of the
Imperial
preroga-
tive.

The victory over the senate was easy and glorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by military force, nor animated by public spirit, yielded its declining authority on the frail and evanescent basis of ancient opinion. The fine theory of a republic insensibly vanished, and made way for the more natural and substantial feelings of monarchy. As the freedom and honours of Rome were successively communicated to the provinces, in which the old government had been either unknown, or was remembered with abhorrence, the tradition of republican maxims was gradually obliterated. The Greek historians of the age of the Antonines,^{*} observe with a malicious pleasure, that although the sovereign of Rome, in compliance with an absolute prejudice, abstained from the name of King, he possessed the

* Appian in Proem.

full measure of regal power. In the reign of Se- CHAP.
verus, the senate was filled with polished and
eloquent slaves from the eastern provinces, who
justified personal flattery by speculative prin- V.
ciples of servitude. These new advocates of pro-
rogative were heard with pleasure by the emperors,
and with patience by the people, when they in-
culcated the duty of passive obedience, and des-
canted on the inevitable mischiefs of rebellion.
The lawyers and the historians concurred in
teaching, that the imperial authority was held,
not by the delegated commission, but by the
irrevocable resignation of the senate; that the
emperor was freed from the restraint of civil
laws, could command by his arbitrary will the
lives and fortunes of his subjects, and might dis-
pose of the empire as of his private patrimony.
The most eminent of the civil lawyers, and parti-
cularly Papinian, Paulus, and Ulpian, flourished
under the house of Severus; and the Roman
jurisprudence having closely united itself with
the system of monarchy, was supposed to have
attained its full maturity and perfection.

The contemporaries of Severus, in the enjoy-
ment of the peace and glory of his reign, forgave
the cruelties by which it had been introduced.
Posterity, who experienced the fatal effects of his
maxims and example, justly considered him as
the principal author of the decline of the Roman
empire.

* Dion Cassius seems to have written with no other view, than to
form these opinions into an historical system. The pandects will
shew how assiduously the lawyers, on their side, laboured in the cause
of prerogative.

CHAP. VI.

The death of Severus.—Tyranny of Caracalla.—Usurpation of Maerinus.—Follies of Elagabalus.—Virtues of Alexander Severus.—Licentiousness of the army.—General state of the Roman finances.

CHAP.
VI.

Greatness
and dis-
content of
Severus.

THE ascent to greatness, however steep and dangerous, may entertain an active spirit with the consciousness and exercise of its own powers; but the possession of a throne could never yet afford a lasting satisfaction to an ambitious mind. This melancholy truth was felt and acknowledged by Severus. Fortune and merit had, from an humble station, elevated him to the first place among mankind. "He had been all things," as he said himself, "and all was of little value." Distracted with the care, not of acquiring, but of preserving an empire, oppressed with age and infirmities, careless of fame,^a and satiated with power, all his prospects of life were closed. The desire of perpetuating the greatness of his family, was the only remaining wish of his ambition and paternal tenderness.

His wife
the em-
press Julia.

Like most of the Africans, Severus was passionately addicted to the vain studies of magic and divination, deeply versed in the interpre-

^a *Histor. Augur.* p. 71. ^b *Capita mil et milii expedit.*

^b *Dion Cassius,* L. *Micvii,* p. 1284.

tion of dreams and omens, and perfectly acquainted with the science of judicial astrology, which, in almost every age except the present, has maintained its dominion over the mind of man. He had lost his first wife whilst he was governor of the province Gaul.^c In the choice of a second he sought only to connect himself with some favorite of fortune; and as soon as he had discovered that a young lady of Emesa in Syria had a *royal nativity*, he solicited, and obtained her hand.^d Julia Domna (for that was her name) deserved all that the stars could promise her. She possessed, even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty; and united to a lively imagination a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex. Her amiable qualities never made any deep impression on the dark and jealous temper of her husband; but in her son's reign, she administered the principal affairs of the empire, with a prudence that supported his authority, and with a moderation that sometimes corrected his wild extravagancies. Julia applied herself to letters and philosophy, with some success, and with the most splendid

^a About the year 166. M. de Tillemont is miserably embarrassed with a passage of Dion, in which the empress Faustina, who died in the year 175, is introduced as having contributed to the marriage of Severus and Julia (l. lxxiv, p. 1243). The learned compiler forgets that Dion is relating, not a real fact, but a dream of Severus, and dreams are circumscribed to no limits of time or space. Did M. de Tillemont imagine that marriages were consummated in the temple of Venus at Rome? Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 339, note 6.

^b Hist. August. p. 65.

^c Hist. August. p. 85.

^d Dion Cassius, l. lxxvii, p. 1304, 1314.

CHAP. VI. reputation. She was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius.^g The grateful flattery of the learned has celebrated her virtue; but, if we may credit the scandal of ancient history, chastity was very far from being the most conspicuous virtue of the empress Julia.^h

Their two sons, Caracalla and Geta.

Two sons, Caracallaⁱ and Geta, were the fruit of this marriage, and the destined heirs of the empire. The fond hopes of the father, and of the Roman world, were soon disappointed by those vain youths, who displayed the indolent security of hereditary princes, and a presumption that fortune would supply the place of merit and application. Without any emulation of virtue or talents, they discovered, almost from their infancy, a fixed and implacable antipathy for each other. Their aversion, confirmed by years, and increased by the arts of their interested favourites, brake out, in childish, and gradually in more serious competitions, and, at length, divided the theatre, the circus, and the court, into two factions, actuated by the hopes and fears of their respective leaders. The prudent emperor endeavoured, by every expedient of advice and

^g See a dissertation of Menage, at the end of his edition of Diogenes Laertius de Peccatis Philosophorum.

^h Dion, I. lxxvi., p. 2285. Aurelius Victor.

ⁱ Bassianus was his first name, as it had been that of his maternal grandfather. During his reign, he assumed the appellation of Antoninus, which is employed by lawyers and ancient historians. After his death, the public indignation loaded him with the nick-names of Tapetinus and Caracalla. The first was borrowed from a celebrated gladiator, the second, from a long Gallic gown which he distributed to the people of Rome.

authority, to allay this growing animosity. The unhappy discord of his sons clouded all his prospects, and threatened to overturn a throne, raised with so much labour, and stained with so much blood, and猜疑。With an impartial hand, he maintained between them an exact balance of favour; conferring on both the rank of Augustus, with the assumed name of Antoninus; and for the first time, the Roman world beheld three emperors.^{Three emperors.}

Yet even this equal conduct served only to inflame the contest, whilst the fierce Caracalla asserted the right of primogeniture, and the milder Geta courted the affections of the people and the soldiers. In the anguish of a disappointed father, Severus foretold, that the weaker of his sons would fall a sacrifice to the stronger, who, in his turn, would be ruined by his own vices.¹

In these circumstances, the intelligence of a war in Britain, and of an invasion of the province by the barbarians of the north, was received with pleasure by Severus. As the vigilance of his lieutenants might have been sufficient for repelling distant enemy, he resolved to employ the honorable pretext of withdrawing his sons from the luxury of Rome, which enervated their minds, and irritated their passions, and of inuring their youth to the toils of war and government. Notwithstanding his advanced age, the

¹ The accession of Caracalla is fixed by the accurate M. de Tillmont to the year 198; the association of Geta to the year 208.

² Herodian, 1. iii, p. 130. The lives of Caracalla and Geta in the Augustan History.

CHAP. he was above three-score), and his gout, which VI. obliged him to be carried in a litter, he transported himself in person into that remote island, attended by his two sons, his whole court, and a formidable army. He immediately passed the walls of Hadrian and Antoninus, and entered the enemy's country, with the design of completing the long-attempted conquest of Britain. He penetrated to the northern extremity of the island, without meeting an enemy. But the concealed ambuscades of the Caledonians, who hung unseen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldness of the climate, and the severity of a winter march across the hills and morasses of Scotland, are reported to have cost the Romans above fifty thousand men. The Caledonians at length yielded to the powerful and obstinate attack, sued for peace, and surrendered a part of their arms, and a large tract of territory. But this apparent submission lasted no longer than the present terror. As soon as the Roman legions had retired, they resumed their hostile independence. Their restless spirit provoked Severus to send a new army into Caledonia, with the most bloody orders, not to subdue, but to extirpate the nation. They were saved by the death of their haughty enemy.

Fingal and his heroes. This Caledonian war, neither marked by decisive events, nor attended with any important consequences, would ill deserve our attention; but it is supposed, not without a considerable

= Dion, l. Epit., p. 1280, &c. Herodian, l. lib., p. 132, &c.

degree of probability, that the invasion of Severus is connected with the most glorious period of the British history or fable. Fingal, whose fame, with that of his heroes and bards, has been revived in our language by a recent publication, is said to have commanded the Caledonians in that memorable juncture, to have eluded the power of Severus, and to have obtained a signal victory on the banks of the Cardn, in which the son of the *king of the world*, Caracul, fled from his arms along the fields of his pride.^a Something of a doubt still hangs over these highland traditions; nor can it be entirely dispelled by the most ingenious researches of modern criticism: but if we could, with safety, indulge the pleasing supposition, that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung, the striking contrast of the situation and manners of the contending nations might amuse a philosophic mind. The parallel would be little to the advantage of the more civilized people, if we compared the unrelenting revenge of Severus with the generous clemency of Fingal; the timid and brutal cruelty of Car-

Contrast of
the Caledo-
nians and
the Ro-
mans.

^a *Ossian's Poems*, vol. i, p. 175.

That the Caracul of Ossian is the Caracalla of the Roman history, is, perhaps, the only point of British antiquity in which Mr. Macpherson and Mr. Whitaker are of the same opinion; and yet the opinion is not without difficulty. In the Caledonian war, the son of Severus was known only by the appellation of *Antoninus*; and it may seem strange that the ~~highland bard~~ should describe him by a nickname, invented four years afterwards, scarcely used by the Romans till after the death of that emperor, and seldom employed by the most ancient historians. See Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1317. Hist. August. p. 89. Amel. Victor. Euseb. in Chron. ad ann. 214.

CHAP. VI. calls with the bravery, the tenderness, the elegant genius of Ossian; the mercenary chiefs who, from motives of fear or interest, served under the imperial standard, with the freeborn warriors who started to arms at the voice of the king of Morven; if, in a word, we contemplated the untutored Caledonians, glowing with the warm virtues of nature, and the degenerate Romans, polluted with the mean vices of wealth and slavery.

Ambition
of Caracalla. 3

The declining health and last illness of Severus inflamed the wild ambition and black passions of Caracalla's soul. Impatient of any delay or division of empire, he attempted, more than once, to shorten the small remainder of his father's days, and endeavoured, but without success, to excite a mutiny among the troops.^P The old emperor had often censured the misguided lenity of Marcus, who, by a single act of justice, might have saved the Romans from the tyranny of his worthless son. Placed in the same situation, he experienced how easily the rigour of a judge dissolves away in the tenderness of a parent. He deliberated, he threatened, but he could not punish; and this last and only instance of mercy was more fatal to the empire than a long series of cruelty. The disorder of his mind irritated the pains of his body; he wished impatiently for death, and hastened the instant of it by his impatience. He expired at York in

Death of
Severus,
and acces-
sion of his
two sons,
A. D. 211,
4th Febru-
ary.

^P Dion, l. lxvi, p. 1282. Hist. August. p. 71. Aurel. Victor.

^q Dion, l. lxvi, p. 1283. Hist. August. p. 89.

the sixty-fifth year of his life, and in the eighteenth of a glorious and successful reign. In his last moments he recommended concord to his sons, and his sons to the army. The salutary advice never reached the heart, or even the understanding, of the impetuous youths; but the more obedient troops, mindful of their oath of allegiance, and of the authority of their deceased master, resisted the solicitations of Caracalla, and proclaimed both brothers emperors of Rome. The new princes soon left the Caledonians in peace, returned to the capital, celebrated their father's funeral with divine honours, and were cheerfully acknowledged as lawful sovereigns, by the senate, the people, and the provinces. Some pre-eminence of rank seems to have been allowed to the elder brother; but they both administered the empire with equal and independent power.

Such a divided form of government would have proved a source of discord between the most affectionate brothers. It was impossible that it could long subsist between two implacable enemies, who neither desired nor could trust a reconciliation. It was visible that one only could reign, and that the other must fall; and each of them judging of his rival's designs by his own, guarded his life with the most jealous vigilance from the repeated attacks of poison or the sword. Their rapid journey through Gaul and Italy,

Dion, l. lxxvi. p. 1294. Herodian, l. iii. p. 195.

CHAP. during which they never eat at the same table,
 VI. or slept in the same house, displayed to the provinces the odious spectacle of fraternal discord. On their arrival at Rome, they immediately divided the vast extent of the imperial palace.⁴ No communication was allowed between their apartments; the doors and passages were diligently fortified, and guards posted and relieved with the same strictness as in a besieged place. The emperors met only in public, in the presence of their afflicted mother; and each surrounded by a numerous train of armed followers. Even on these occasions of ceremony, the dissimulation of courts could ill disguise the rancour of their hearts.⁵

Fruitless
negotiations
for dividing
the empire
between
them.

This latent civil war already distracted the whole government, when a scheme was suggested that accrued of mutual benefit to the hostile brothers.

⁴ Mr. Hume is justly surprised at a passage of Herodian, l. iv, p. 139, who, on this occasion, represents the imperial palace as equal in extent to the rest of Rome. The whole region of the Palatine mount, on which it was built, occupied, at most, a circumference of eleven or twelve thousand feet (see the Notitia and Veter, in Nardini's *Roma Antica*). But we should recollect that the greatest senators had almost surrounded the city with their extensive gardens and superb palaces, the greatest part of which had been gradually confiscated by the emperors. If Geta resided in the gardens that bore his name on the Janiculum, and if Caracalla inhabited the gardens of Mæcenas on the Esquiline, the rival brothers were separated from each other by the distance of several miles; and yet the intermediate space was filled by the imperial gardens of Sallust, of Lucilius, of Agrippa, of Domitius, of Cælius, &c. all skirting round the city, and all connected with each other, and with the palace, by bridges thrown over the Tiber and the streets. But this explanation of Herodian would require, though it ill deserves, a particular disquisition, illustrated by a map of ancient Rome.

⁵ Herodian, l. iv, p. 139.

thers. It was proposed, that since it was impossible to reconcile their minds, they should separate their interest, and divide the empire between them. The conditions of the treaty were already drawn with some accuracy. It was agreed, that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and the western Africa, and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta, who might fix his residence at Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome itself in wealth and greatness; that numerous armies should be constantly encamped on either side of the Thracian Bosphorus, to guard the frontiers of the rival monarchies; and that the senators of European extraction should acknowledge the sovereign of Rome, whilst the natives of Asia followed the emperor of the East. The tears of the empress Julia interrupted the negociation, the first idea of which had filled every Roman breast with surprise and indignation. The mighty mass of conquest was so intimately interwoven by the hand of time and policy, that it required the most forcible violence to rend it asunder. The Romans had reason to dread, that the disjointed members would soon be reduced by a civil war under the dominion of one master; but if the separation was permanent, the division of the provinces must terminate in the dissolution of an empire whose unity had hitherto remained inviolate.*

CHAP.

VI.

* Herodian, L. iv, p. 144.

CHAP.

VI.

Murder of
Geta,
A. D. 212,
27th Fe-
bruary.

Had the treaty been carried into execution, the sovereign of Europe might soon have been the conqueror of Asia; but Caracalla obtained an easier though a more guilty victory. He artfully listened to his mother's entreaties, and consented to meet his brother in her apartment, on terms of peace and reconciliation. In the midst of their conversation, some centurions, who had contrived to conceal themselves, rushed with drawn swords upon the unfortunate Geta. His distracted mother strove to protect him in her arms; but, in the unavailing struggle, she was wounded in the hand, and covered with the blood of her younger son, while she saw the elder animating and assisting* the fury of the assassins. As soon as the deed was perpetrated, Caracalla, with hasty steps, and horror in his countenance, ran towards the prætorian camp as his only refuge, and threw himself on the ground before the statues of the tutelar deities.[†] The soldiers attempted to raise and comfort him. In broken and disordered words he informed them of his imminent danger and fortunate escape; insinuating that he had prevented the designs of his enemy, and declared his resolution to live and die with his fa-

* Caracalla consecrated, in the temple of Serapis, the sword, with which, as he boasted, he had slain his brother Geta. Dion, I. lxxvii, p. 1307.

[†] Herodian, I. iv, p. 147. In every Roman camp there was a small chapel near the head-quarters, in which the statues of the tutelar deities were preserved and adored; and we may remark, that the *legates*, and other military ensigns, were in the first rank of these deities: an excellent institution, which confirmed discipline by the sanction of religion. See *Lipotus de Miltia Romana*, iv, 5, v, 2.

ful troops. Geta had been the favourite of the CHAP.
soldiers; but complaint was useless, revenge was
dangerous, and they still revered the son of
Severus. Their discontent died away in idle
murmurs, and Caracalla soon convinced them of
the justice of his cause, by distributing in one
lavish doapte the accumulated treasures of his
father's reign.* The real *sentiments* of the sol-
diers alone were of importance to his power or
safety. Their declaration in his favour com-
manded the dutiful *professions* of the senate. The
obsequious assembly was always prepared to ratify
the decision of fortune; but as Caracalla wished
to assuage the first emotions of public indignation,
the name of Geta was mentioned with de-
cency, and he received the funeral honours of a
Roman emperor.* Posterity, in pity to his mis-
fortune, has cast a veil over his vices. We con-
sider that young prince as the innocent victim of
his brother's ambition, without recollecting that
he himself wanted power, rather than inclination,
to consummate the same attempts of revenge and
murder.

The crime went not unpunished. Neither Remorse
business, nor pleasure, nor flattery, could defend
Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience;
and he confessed, in the anguish of a tortured
mind, that his disordered fancy often beheld the
angry forms of his father and his brother, rising

and cruelty
of Car-
calla.

* Herodian, l. iv, p. 148. Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1289.

* Geta was placed among the gods. *Sit diuus, dum non sit vivus,*
said his brother. Hist. August. p. 91. Some marks of Geta's con-
secration are still found upon medals.

CHAP. into life, to threaten and upbraid him.^b The VI. consciousness of his crime should have induced him to convince mankind, by the virtues of his reign, that the bloody deed had been the involuntary effect of fatal necessity. But the repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever could remind him of his guilt, or recal the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death; the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the emperor Marcus; and even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations, to suppress her sighs, and to receive the assassin with smiles of joy and approbation. It was computed that, under the vague appellation of the friends of Geta, above twenty thousand persons of both sexes suffered death. His guards and freedmen, the ministers of his serious business, and the companions of his looser hours, those who by his interest had been promoted to any commands in the army or provinces, with the long-connected chain of their dependents, were included in the proscription; which endeavoured to reach every one who had maintained the smallest correspondence with Geta, who lamented his death, or who even mentioned his name.^c

^b Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1507.

^c Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1509. Historian, l. iv, p. 150. Dion (p. 1298) says, that the comic poets no longer durst employ the name of Geta in

Helvius Pertinax, son to the prince of that name, ^{CHAR.} lost his life by an unseasonable witticism.^d It ^{VI.} was a sufficient crime of Thrasea Priscus to be descended from a family in which the love of liberty seemed an hereditary quality. The particular cause of calumny and suspicion were at length established; and when a senator was accused of being a secret enemy to the government, the emperor was satisfied with the general proof that he was a man of property and virtue. From this well-grounded principle he frequently drew the most bloody inferences.

The execution of so many innocent citizens ^{Death of} ~~was bewailed by the secret tears of their friends~~ ^{Papinian.} and families. The death of Papinian, the praetorian prefect, was lamented as a public calamity. During the last seven years of Severus, he had exercised the most important offices of the state, and, by his salutary influence, guided the emperor's steps in the paths of justice and moderation. In full assurance of his virtues and abilities, Severus, on his deathbed, had conjured him to watch over the prosperity and weal

in their plays, and that the estates of those who mentioned it in their testaments, were confiscated.

^d Caracalla had assumed the names of several conquered nations; Pertinax observed, that the name of Getaeus (he had obtained some advantage of the Goths or Getae) would be a proper addition to Parthicus, Alemannicus, &c. Hist. August. p. 89.

Dion. l. lxxvii, p. 1291. He was probably descended from Helvidius Priscus, and Thrasea Pætus, those patriots, whose firm, but useless and unseasonable virtue, has been immortalized by Tacitus.

CHAP. of the imperial family.^f The honest labours of
 VI. Papinian served only to inflame the hatred which
 Caracalla had already conceived against his fa-
 ther's minister. After the murder of Geta, the
 prefect was commanded to exert the powers of
 his skill and eloquence in a studied apology for
 that atrocious deed. The philosophic Seneca
 had condescended to compose a similar epistle to
 the senate, in the name of the son and assassin of
 Agrippina:^g “That it was easier to commit
 ‘than to justify a parricide,’” was the glorious
 reply of Papinian,^h who did not hesitate be-
 tween the loss of life and that of honour. Such
 intrepid virtue, which had escaped pure and
 unsullied from the intrigues of courts, the habits
 of business, and the arts of his profession, reflects
 more lustre on the memory of Papinian, than
 all his great employments, his numerous writings,
 and the superior reputation as a lawyer, which
 he has preserved through every age of the Ro-
 man jurisprudence.ⁱ

His tyran-
ny extend-
ed over the
whole em-
pire. It had hitherto been the peculiar felicity of the Romans, and in the worst of times their consolation, that the virtue of the emperors was active, and their vice indolent. Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus, visited their extensive dominions in person, and their progress was marked by acts of wisdom and beneficence.

^f It is said that Papinian was himself a relation of the empress Julia.

^g Tacit. Annal. xiv. 2.

^h Hist. August. p. 88.

ⁱ With regard to Papinian, see Heineccius's Historia Juris Romani, L. 330, &c.

The tyranny of Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders.¹ But Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind. He left the capital (and never returned to it) about a year^{a. d. 213.} after the murder of Geta. The rest of his reign was spent in the several provinces of the empire, particularly those of the East, and every province was, by turns, the scene of his rapine and cruelty. The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments, at an immense expence, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect, in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either disdained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial fines and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes.² In the midst of peace, and upon the slightest provocation, he issued his commands, at Alexandria in Egypt, for a general massacre. From a secure post in the temple of Serapis, he viewed and directed the slaughter of many thousand citizens, as well as strangers, without distinguishing either the number or the crime of the sufferers; since, as he coolly informed

¹ Tiberius and Domitian never moved from the neighbourhood of Rome. Nero made a short journey into Greece. "Et laudatorum principum ~~multis~~ ex aequo quamvis procul agentibus. Sævi proximis ingruunt." Tacit. Hist. iv. 75.

² Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1294.

CHAP. the senate,
VI. all the Alexandrians, those who had
perished, and those who had escaped, were alike
guilty.¹

Relaxation of discipline. The wise instructions of Severus never made any lasting impression on the mind of his son, who, although not destitute of imagination and eloquence, was equally devoid of judgment and humanity.² One dangerous maxim, worthy of a tyrant, was remembered and abused by Caracalla, “To secure the affections of the army, “and to esteem the rest of his subjects as of little moment.”³ But the liberality of the father had been restrained by prudence, and his indulgence to the troops was tempered by firmness and authority. The careless profusion of the son was the policy of one reign, and the inevitable ruin both of the army and of the empire. The vigour of the soldiers, instead of being confirmed by the severe discipline of camps, melted away in the luxury of cities. The excessive increase of their pay and donatives,⁴ exhausted

¹ Dion, I. lxxvii, p. 1307. Herodian, I. vii, p. 158. The former represents it as a cruel massacre, the latter as a perfidious one too. It seems probable, that the Alexandrians had irritated the tyrant by their vanities, and perhaps by their tumults.

² Dion, l. lxxvi, p. 1296.

³ Dion, I. lxxvi, p. 1284. Mr. Wotton (Hist. of Rome, p. 330) suspects that this maxim was invented by Caracalla himself, and attributed to his father.

⁴ Dion (I. lxxviii, p. 1343) informs us, that the extraordinary gifts of Caracalla to the army amounted annually to seventy millions of drachmas (about two millions three hundred and fifty thousand pounds). There is another passage in Dion, concerning the military pay, infinitely confused; were it less obscure, imperfect, and probably corrupt. The best sense seems to be, that the praetorian guards

the state to enrich the military order, whose ~~char-~~
modesty in peace, and service in war, are best
secured by an honourable poverty. The de-
meanour of Caracalla was haughty and full of
pride; but with his troops he forgot even the
proper dignity of his rank, encouraged their in-
solent ~~ostentatious~~, and, neglecting the essential
duties of a general, affected to imitate the dress
and manners of a common soldier.

VI.

Murder of
Caracalla.
A. D. 217,
8th March.

It was impossible that such a character, and such conduct as that of Caracalla, could inspire either love or reverence; but as long as his vices were beneficial to the empire, he was secure from the dangers of rebellion. A secret conspiracy, provoked by his own jealousy, was fatal to the tyrant. The praetorian prefecture was divided between two ministers. The military department was intrusted to Adventus, an experienced rather than an able soldier; and the civil affairs were transacted by Opilius Macrinus, who, by his dexterity in business, had raised himself, with a fair character, to that high office. But his fortune varied with the caprice of the emperor, and his life might depend on the slightest suspicion, or the most casual circumstance. Malice or fanaticism had suggested to an African, deeply

guards received twelve hundred and fifty drachmae (forty pounds) a year (Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1907). Under the reign of Augustus, they were paid at the rate of two drachmae, or denarii, per day, 720 a year (Toga, Annal. i. 17). Domitian, who increased the soldiers pay one fourth, must have raised the praetorians to 960 drachmae (Graevius de Pausania Veteri, l. iii, c. 2). These successive augmentations ruined the empire, for, with the soldiers pay, their numbers too were increased. We have seen the praetorians alone increased from 10,000 to 50,000 men.

CHAP. skilled in the knowledge of futurity, a very dangerous prediction, that Macrinus and his son were destined to reign over the empire. The report was soon diffused through the province; and when the man was sent in chains to Rome, he still asserted, in the presence of the prefect of the city, the faith of his prophecy. That magistrate, who had received the most pressing instructions to inform himself of the successors of Caracalla, immediately communicated the examination of the African to the imperial court, which at that time resided in Syria. But, notwithstanding the diligence of the public messengers, a friend of Macrinus found means to apprise him of the approaching danger. The emperor received the letters from Rome; and as he was then engaged in the conduct of a chariot race, he delivered them unopened to the praetorian prefect, directing him to dispatch the ordinary affaires, and to report the more important business that might be contained in them. Macrinus read his fate, and resolved to prevent it. He inflamed the discontents of some inferior officers, and employed the hand of Martialis, a desperado soldier, who had been refused the rank of centurion. The devotion of Caracalla prompted him to make a pilgrimage from Edessa to the celebrated temple of the moon at Carrhae. He was attended by a body of cavalry; but having stopped on the road for some necessary occasion, his guards preserved a respectful distance, and Martialis approaching his person under a pretence of duty, stabbed him with a dagger. The bold

assassin was instantly killed by a Scythian archer ^{CHAP.} of the imperial guard. Such was the end of a ^{VI.} monster whose life disgraced human nature, and whose reign accused the patience of the Romans.³ The grateful soldiers forgot his vices, remembered only his partial liberality, and obliged the senate to prostitute their own dignity and that of religion, by granting him a place among the gods. Whilst he was upon earth, Alexander was the only hero whom this god ^{Imitation of Alexander.} deemed worthy his admiration. He assumed the name and ensigns of Alexander, formed a Macedonian phalanx of guards, persecuted the disciples of Aristotle, and displayed with a puerile enthusiasm the only sentiment by which he discovered any regard for virtue or glory. We can easily conceive, that after the battle of Narva, and the conquest of Poland, Charles the Twelfth (though he still wanted the more elegant accomplishments of the son of Philip) might boast of having rivalled his valour and magnanimity; but in no one action of his life did Caracalla express the faintest resemblance of the Macedonian hero, except in the murder of a great number of his own and of his father's friends.⁴

After the extinction of the house of Severus, the Roman world remained three days without a <sup>Election and char-
acter of
Macrinus.</sup>

³ Dion, l. lxxviii; p. 1312. Herodian, l. iv, p. 162.

⁴ The fondness of Caracalla for the name and ensigns of Alexander, is still preserved on the medals of that emperor. See Spanheim. de Usu Numismatis, Dissertat. xii. Herodian (l. iv, p. 154) had seen very ridiculous pictures, in which a figure was drawn, with one side of the face like Alexander, and the other like Caracalla.

CHAP. VI. master. The choice of the army (for the authority of a distant and feeble senate was little regarded) hung in anxious suspense; as no candidate presented himself whose distinguished birth and merit could engage their attachment, and unite their suffrages. The decisive weight of the praetorian guards elevated the hopes of their prefects, and these powerful ministers began to assert their *legal* claim to fill the vacancy of the imperial throne. Adventus, however, the senior prefect, conscious of his age and infirmities, of his small reputation, and his smaller abilities, resigned the dangerous honour to the crafty ambition of his colleague Macrinus, whose well dissembled grief removed all suspicion of his being accessory to his master's death.^{*} The troops neither loved nor esteemed his character. They cast their eyes around in search of a competitor, and at last yielded with reluctance to his promises of unbounded liberality and indulgence.

A. D. 217. March 11. A short time after his accession, he conferred on his son Diadumenianus, at the age of only ten years, the imperial title and the popular name of Antoninus. The beautiful figure of the youth, assisted by an additional donative, for which the ceremony furnished a pretext, might attract, it was hoped, the favour of the army, and secure the doubtful throne of Macrinus.

Discontent
of the se-
nate.

The authority of the new sovereign had been ratified by the cheerful submission of the senate and provinces. They exulted in their unexpected

* Herodian, I. iv, p. 169. Hist. August., p. 94.

deliverance from a hated ~~tyrant~~^{VI.} and it seemed ~~char~~
of little consequence to examine into the virtues
of the successors of Caracalla. But as soon as the
first transports of joy subsided, they began to consider the merits of the emperors
with a critical spirit, and to arraign the many
choice qualities of Elagabalus.¹ It had hitherto been con-
sidered as a fundamental maxim of the constitu-
tion, that the emperor must be always chosen by
the senate, and the sovereign power, no longer
exercised by the whole body, was always dele-
gated to the chief magistrate. Plautianus
was not only the first who had usurped the empire,
but he had also destroyed the nobility of their origin; and the equestrian order was still
in possession of that great office, which command-
ed with arbitrary sway the lives and fortunes of
the senate. A murmur of indignation was heard,
that a man whose obscure² extraction had never
been illustriated by any signal service, should dare
to invest himself with the purple, instead of be-
stowing it on some

¹ Dion. lxxviii. p. 1350. Elagabalus was born, with daring, to seat himself on the throne; though, as praetorian prefect, he could not have been admitted into the senate after the voice of the crowd had cleared the house. The personal favour of Plautianus and Sejanus had broke through the established rule. They rose indeed from the equestrian order, but they preserved the pro-
fession with the rank of senator, even with the consulship.

² He was a native of Ceasarea in Cappadocia, and obtained his fortune by serving in the household of Plautian, from whom, when he nowow-
ly ~~disengaged~~, his enemies asserted that he was born a slave, and had exer-
cised, among other infamous professions, that of gladiator. The fashion of aspersing the birth and condition of an adversary, seems to have lasted from the time of the Greek orators, to the learned
grammarians of the last age.

CHAP. in both and dignity to the splendour of the imperial station. As soon as the character of Macrinus was surveyed by the sharp eye of discontent, some vices, and many defects, were easily discovered. The choice of his ministers was in many instances justly censured; and the dissatisfied people, with their usual candour, accused at once his indolent tameness and his excessive severity.⁸

and the army.

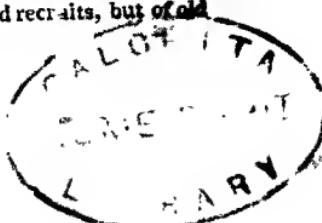
His rash ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness, and impossible to fall without instant destruction. Trained in the arts of courts and the forms of civil business, he trembled in the presence of the fierce and undisciplined multitude over whom he had assumed the command; his military talents were despised, and his personal courage suspected; a whisper that circulated in the camp, disclosed the secret of the conspiracy against the late emperor, aggravated the guilt of murder by the baseness of hypocrisy, and heightened contempt by detestation. To alienate the soldiers, and to provoke inevitable ruin, the character of a reformer was only wanting; and such was the peculiar hardness of his fate, that Macrinus was compelled to exercise that invidious office. The prodigality of Caracalla had left behind it a long train of ruin and disorder; and if that worthless

⁸ Both Dion and Herodian speak of the virtues and vices of Macrinus, with candour and impartiality; but the author of his life, in the African history, seems to have implicitly copied some of the venomous writings, employed by Elagabalus, to blacken the memory of his predecessor.

tyrant had been capable of reflecting on the sure CHAP.
consequences of his own conduct, he would per- VI
haps have enjoyed the dark prospect of the dis-
tress and calamities which he bequeathed to his
successors.

In the management of this necessary refor- Macrinus
mation, Macrinus proceeded with a cautious pro- attempts a
deance, which would have restored health and refor-
vigor to the Roman army, in an easy and almost ma-
tion of the
imperceptible manner. To the soldiers already army.
engaged in the service, he was constrained to leave the dangerous privileges and extravagant
pay given by Caracalla; but the new recruits were received on the more moderate, though liberal, establishment of Severus, and gradually formed to modesty and obedience.* One fatal error destroyed the salutary effects of this judicious plan. The numerous army, assembled in the east by the late emperor, instead of being immediately dispersed by Macrinus through the several provinces, was suffered to remain united in Syria, during the winter that followed his elevation. In the luxurious idleness of their quar-
ters, the troops viewed their strength and numbers, communicated their complaints, and revolved in their minds the advantages of another revolution. The veterans, instead of being flattered by the advantageous distinction, were alarmed by the first steps of the emperor, which they

* Dion, b. lxxxiii, p. 1336. The sense of the author is as clear as the intention of the emperor; but M. Wotton has mistaken both, by understanding the distinction, not of veterans and recruits, but of old and new legions. History of Rome, p. 347.



CHAP. considered as the presage of his future intentions.

VI.

The recruits, with sullen reluctance, entered on a service, whose labours were increased, while its rewards were diminished by a covetous and unwarlike sovereign. The murmurs of the army swelled with impunity into seditious clamours; and the partial mutinies betrayed a spirit of discontent and disaffection, that waited only for the slightest occasion to break out on every side, into a general rebellion. To minds thus disposed, the occasion soon presented itself.

Death of
the em-
press Julia.
Education,
preten-
sions, and
revolt of
Elagaba-
lius, called
at first Bas-
sianus and
Antoninus.

The empress Julia had experienced all the vicissitudes of fortune. From an humble station she had been raised to greatness, only to taste the superior bitterness of an exalted rank. She was doomed to weep over the death of one of her sons, and over the life of the other. The cruel fate of Caracalla, though her good sense must have long taught her to expect it, awakened the feelings of a mother and of an empress. Notwithstanding the respectful civility expressed by the usurper towards the widow of Severus, she descended with a painful struggle into the condition of a subject, and soon withdrew herself, by a voluntary death, from the anxious and humiliating dependence.⁷ Julia Mæsa, her sister, was ordered to leave the court and Antioch. She retired to Emesa with an immense fortune, the fruit of twenty years favour, accompanied by her two daughters, Soemias and Monæa, each of

⁷ Dion, l. lxxviii, p. 1336. The abridgement of Xiphilin, though less particular, is in this place clearer than the original.

whom was a widow, and each had an only son. CHAP.
 Bassianus, for that was the name of the son of VI.
 Soæmias, was consecrated to the honourable mi-
 nistry of high priest of the sun; and this holy
 vocation, embraced either from prudence or su-
 perstition, contributed to raise the Syrian youth
 to the empire of Rome. A numerous body of
 troops was stationed at Emesa; and, as the se-
 vere discipline of Macrinus had constrained them
 to pass the winter encamped, they were eager to
 revenge the cruelty of such unaccustomed hard-
 ships. The soldiers, who resorted in crowds to
 the temple of the sun, beheld with veneration
 and delight the elegant dress and figure of the
 young pontiff; they recognised, or they thought
 that they recognised, the features of Caracalla,
 whose memory they now adored. The artful
 Mæsa saw and cherished their rising partiality,
 and readily sacrificing her daughter's reputation
 to the fortune of her grandson, she insinuated that
 Bassianus was the natural son of their murdered
 sovereign. The sums distributed by her emis-
 saries with a lavish hand, silenced every objection,
 and the profusion sufficiently proved the affinity,
 or at least the resemblance, of Bassianus with the
 great original. The young Antoninus (for he
 had assumed and polluted that respectable name) ^{A. D. 218.} May 16.
 was declared emperor by the troops of Emesa,
 asserted his hereditary right, and called aloud on
 the armies to follow the standard of a young and
 liberal prince, who had taken up arms to revenge

CHAP. his father's death and the oppression of the military order.^a

VI. Defeat and
death of
Macrinus. Whilst a conspiracy of women and eunuchs was concerted with prudence, and conducted with rapid vigour, Macrinus, who, by a decisive motion, might have crushed his infant enemy, floated between the opposite extremes of terror and security, which alike fixed him inactive at Antioch. A spirit of rebellion diffused itself through all the camps and garrisons of Syria, successive detachments murdered their officers, and joined the party of the rebels; and the tardy restitution of military pay and privileges was imputed to the acknowledged weakness of Macrinus. At length he marched out of Antioch, to meet the increasing and zealous army of the young pretender. His own troops seemed to take the field with faintness and reluctance; but, in the heat of the battle,^b the praetorian guards, moved by an involuntary impulse, asserted the

p. 218,
7th June.

^a According to Lampridius (*Hist. August.* p. 136), Alexander Severus lived twenty-nine years, three months, and seven days. As he was killed March 19, 235, he was born December 12, 205, and was consequently about this time thirteen years old, as his elder cousin might be about seventeen. This computation suits much better the history of the young princes, than that of Herodian (*I. v.*, p. 191), who represents him as three years younger; whilst, by an opposite error of chronology, he lengthens the reign of Elagabalus two years beyond its real duration. For the particulars of the conspiracy, see Dion, *I. lxxviii.*, p. 1339. Herodian, *I. v.*, p. 192.

^b By a most dangerous proclamation of the pretended Anteius, every soldier who brought in his officer's head, became entitled to his private estate, as well as to his military compensation.

Dion, *I. lxxviii.*, p. 1345. Herodian, *I. v.*, p. 196. The battle was fought near the village of Thumæ, about two-and-twenty miles from Antioch.

superiority of their valour and discipline. The rebel ranks were broken; when the mother and grandmother of the Syrian prince, who, according to their eastern custom, had attended the army, threw themselves from their covered chariots, and, by exciting the compassion of the soldiers, endeavoured to animate their drooping courage. Antoninus himself, who, in the rest of his life, never acted like a man, in this important crisis of his fate approved himself a hero, mounted his horse, and, at the head of his rallied troops, charged sword in hand among the thickest of the enemy; whilst the eunuch Gannys, whose occupations had been confined to female cares and the soft luxury of Asia, displayed the talents of an able and experienced general. The battle still raged with doubtful violence, and Macrinus might have obtained the victory, had he not betrayed his own cause by a shameful and precipitate flight. His cowardice served only to protract his life a few days, and to stamp deserved ignominy on his misfortunes. It is scarcely necessary to add, that his son Diadumenianus was involved in the same fate. As soon as the stub-born praetorians could be convinced that they fought for a prince who had basely deserted them, they surrendered to the conqueror; the contending parties of the Roman army, mingling tears of joy and tenderness, united under the banner of the imagined son of Caracalla, and the best acknowledged with pleasure the first emperor of Asiatic extraction.

CHAP. VI. The letters of Macrinus had condescended to inform the senate of the slight disturbance occasioned by an impostor in Syria, and a decree immediately passed, declaring the rebel and his family public enemies; with a promise of pardon, however, to such of his deluded adherents as should merit it by an immediate return to their duty. During the twenty days that elapsed from the declaration to the victory of Antoninus (for in so short an interval was the fate of the Roman world decided), the capital and the provinces, more especially those of the East, were distracted with hopes and fears, agitated with tumult, and stained with a useless effusion of civil blood, since whosoever of the rivals prevailed in Syria, must reign over the empire. The specious letters in which the young conqueror announced his victory to the obedient senate, were filled with professions of virtue and moderation; the shining examples of Marcus and Augustus, he should ever consider as the great rule of his administration; and he affected to dwell with pride on the striking resemblance of his own age and fortunes with those of Augustus, who in the earliest youth had revenged by a successful war the murder of his father. By adopting the style of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, son of Antoninus, and grandson of Severus, he tacitly asserted his hereditary claim to the empire; but, by assuming the tribunitian and proconsular powers before they had been conferred on him by a decree of the senate, he offended the delicacy of Roman prejudice. This new and injudicious violation of the constitution

was probably dictated either by the ignorance of ^{CHAP.}
his Syrian courtiers, or the fierce disdain of his ^{VI.}
military followers.^{*}

As the attention of the new emperor was diverted by the most trifling amusements, he wasted many months in luxurious progress from Syria to Italy, passed at Nicomedia his first winter after his victory, and deferred till the ensuing summer his triumphal entry into the capital. A faithful picture, however, which preceded his arrival, and was placed by his immediate order over the altar of victory in the senate-house, conveyed to the Romans the just but unworthy resemblance of his person and manners. He was drawn in his sacerdotal robes of silk and gold, after the loose flowing fashion of the Medes and Phœnicians; his head was covered with a lofty tiara, his numerous collars and bracelets were adorned with gems of an inestimable value. His eyebrows were tinged with black, and his cheeks painted with an artificial red and white.^a The grave senators confessed with a sigh, that, after having long experienced the stern tyranny of their own countrymen, Rome was at length humbled beneath the effeminate luxury of oriental despotism.

The sun was worshipped at Emesa, under the ^{His super-}
^{name of Elagabalus,}^b and under the form of a ^{stitution.}

* Dion, l. lxxix, p. 1353.

^a Dion, l. lxxix, p. 1363. Herodian, l. v, p. 189.

^b This name is derived by the learned from two Syriac words, *Ela*, a god, and *Gabal*, to form, the forming, or plastic god, a proper, and even happy epithet for the sun. Wotton's History of Rome, p. 378.

CHAP. black conical stone, which, as it was universally
believed, had fallen from heaven on that sacred
place. To this protecting deity, Antoninus, not
without some reason, ascribed his elevation to
the throne. The display of superstitious grati-
tude, was the only serious business of his reign.
The triumph of the god of Emesa over all the
religions of the earth, was the great object of his
zeal and vanity; and the appellation of Elagab-
lus (for he presumed as pontiff and favourite to
adopt that sacred name) was dearer to him than all
the titles of imperial greatness. In a solemn pro-
cession through the streets of Rome, the way was
strewed with gold dust; the black stone, set in
precious gems, was placed on a chariot drawn by
six milk-white horses richly caparisoned. The
pious emperor held the reins, and, supported by
his ministers, moved slowly backwards, that he
might perpetually enjoy the felicity of the divine
presence. In a magnificent temple raised on the
Palatine mount, the sacrifices of the god Elago-
balus were celebrated with every circumstance of
cost and solemnity. The richest wines, the most
extraordinary victims, and the rarest aromatics,
were profusely consumed on his altar. Around
the altar a chorus of Syrian damsels performed
their lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian
music, whilst the gravest personages of the state
and army, clothed in long Phoenician tunics, of-
ficiated in the meanest functions with affected
zeal and secret indignation.

^f Herodian, l. v., p. 190:

To this temple, as to the common centre of ~~the~~^{CHAP.} VI.
religious worship, the imperial fanatic attempted
to remove the ancilla, the palladium,^c and all
the sacred pledges of the faith of Numa. A
crowd of inferior deities attended in various sta-
tions the majesty of the god of Emesa; but his
court was still imperfect, till a female of distin-
guished rank was admitted to his bed. Pallas
had been first chosen for his consort; but ~~she~~
was dreaded lest her warlike terrors might affright
the soft delicacy of a Syrian deity, the moon,
adored by the ~~Arabs~~^a under the name of Astarte,
was deemed a more suitable companion for the
sun. Her image, with the rich offerings of her
temple as a marriage portion, was transported
with solemn pomp from Carthage to Rome, and
the day of these mystic nuptials was a general
festival in the capital and throughout the em-
pire.^b

A rational voluptuary adheres with invariable respect to the temperate dictates of nature, and improves the gratifications of sense by social intercourse, endearing connexions, and the soft colouring of taste and the imagination. But Elagabalus (I speak of the emperor of that name),

^a He broke into the ~~sanctuary~~ of Vesta, and carried away a statue, which he supposed to be the palladium; but the vestals boasted, that, by a ~~pious~~ fraud, they had imposed a counterfeit image on the profane intruder. Hist. August. p. 103.

^b *Adm. l. mix.*, p. 1360. *Herodian, l. v.*, p. 193. The subjects of the empire were obliged to make liberal presents to the new-married couple; and whatever they had promised during the life of Elagabalus, was carefully exacted under the administration of Macræa.

CHAP. corrupted by his youth, his country, and his for-

VI. tune, abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures

with ungoverned fury, and soon found disgust and satiety in the midst of his enjoyments. The inflammatory powers of art were summoned to his aid : the confused multitude of women, of wines, and of dishes, and the studied variety of attitudes and sauces, served to revive his languid appetites. New terms and new inventions in these sciences, the only ones cultivated and patronised by the monarch,¹ signalized his reign, and transmitted his infamy to succeeding times.

A capricious prodigality supplied the want of taste and elegance ; and whilst Elagabalus

ravished away the treasures of his people in the wildest extravagance, his own voice and that of his flatterers applauded a spirit and magnificence unknown to the tameness of his predecessors.

To confound the order of seasons and climates,

to sport with the passions and prejudices of his subjects, and to subvert every law of nature and decency, were in the number of his most delicious amusements. A long train of concubines, and a rapid succession of wives, among whom

was a vestal virgin, ravished by force from her

¹ The invention of a new sauce was liberally rewarded ; but if it was not relished, the inventor was confined to eat of nothing else, till he had discovered another, more agreeable to the imperial palate. Hist. August. p. 111.

* He never would eat sea-fish, except at a great distance from the sea ; he then would distribute vast quantities of the rarest sorts brought at an immense expence, to the peasants of the inland country. Hist. August. p. 109.

sacred asylum,¹ were insufficient to satisfy the impotence of his passions. The master of the Roman world affected to copy the dress and manners of the female sex, preferred the distaff to the sceptre, and dishonoured the principal dignities of the empire by distributing them among his numerous lovers; one of whom was publicly invested with the title and authority of the emperor's, or as he more properly styled himself, of the empress's husband.^m

It may seem probable, the vices and follies of Elagabalus have been adorned by fancy, and blackened by prejudice.ⁿ Yet confining ourselves to the public scenes displayed before the contempt of decency which distinguished the Roman grants. Roman people, and attested by grave and contemporary historians, their inexpressible infamy surpasses that of any other age or country. The licence of an eastern monarch is secluded from the eye of curiosity by the inaccessible walls of his seraglio. The sentiments of honour and gallantry have introduced a refinement of pleasure, a regard for decency, and a respect for the public opinion, into the modern courts of Europe; but the corrupt and opulent nobles of Rome gratified

¹ Dion, l. lxxix, p. 1853. Herodian, l. v, p. 192.

^m Hierocles enjoyed that honour; but he would have been supplanted by one Zoticus, had he not contrived, by a potion, to enervate the powers of his rival, who being found, on trial, unequal to his reputation, was driven with ignominy from the palace. Dion, l. xxxiii, p. 1363, 1364. A dancer was made prefect of the city, a charioteer prefect of the watch, a barber prefect of the provisions. These three ministers, with many inferior officers, were all recommended, *conscriptio membrorum*. Hist. August. p. 105.

ⁿ Even the credulous compiler of his life, in the Augustine history (p. 111), is inclined to suspect that his vices may have been exaggerated.

CHAP. every vice that could be collected from the
 VI. mighty conflux of nations and manners. Secure
 of impunity, careless of censure, they lived without
 restraint in the patient and humble society of
 their slaves and parasites. The emperor, in his
 turn, viewing every rank of his subjects with the
 same contemptuous indifference, asserted without
 controul his sovereign privilege of lust and luxury.

Diseon-
tents of the
army.

The most worthless of mankind are not afraid to condemn in others the same disorders which they allow in themselves; and can readily discover some nice difference of age, character, or station, to justify the partial distinction. The licentious soldiers, who had raised to the throne the dissolute son of Caracalla, blushed at their ignominious choice, and turned with disgust from that monster, to contemplate with pleasure the opening virtues of his cousin Alexander the son of Mamaea. The crafty Mæsa, sensible that her grandson Elagabalus must inevitably destroy himself by his own vices, had provided another and surer support of her family. Embracing a favourable moment of fondness and devotion, she had persuaded the young emperor to adopt Alexander, and to invest him with the title of Cæsar, that his own divine occupations might be no longer interrupted by the care of the earth. In the second rank that amiable prince soon acquired the affections of the public, and excited the tyrant's jealousy, who resolved to terminate the dangerous competition, either by corrupting the manners, or by taking away the life, of his rival.

Alexander
Severus
declared
Cæsar.
A. D. 221.

His arts proved unsuccessful; his vain designs CHAP.
were constantly discovered by his own loquacious VI.
folly, and disappointed by those virtuous and
faithful servants whom the prudence of Mamaea
had placed about the person of her son. In a
hasty sally of passion, Elagabalus resolved to ex-
ecute by force what he had been unable to compass
by fraud, and by a despotic sentence degraded
his cousin from the rank and honours of Caesar.
The message was received in the senate with
silence, and in the camp with fury. The praeto-
rian guards swore to protect Alexander, and to
revenge the dishonoured majesty of the throne.
The tears and promises of the trembling Elaga-
balus, who only begged them to spare his life,
and to leave him in the possession of his beloved
Hierocles, diverted their just indignation; and they
contented themselves with empowering their
prefects to watch over the safety of Alexander,
and the conduct of the emperor.^o

It was impossible that such a reconciliation should last, or that even the mean soul of Elaga-
balus could hold an empire on such humiliat-
ing terms of dependence. He soon attempted, by a
dangerous experiment, to try the temper of the
soldiers. The report of the death of Alexander,
and the natural suspicion that he had been mur-
dered, inflamed their passions into fury, and the
tempest of the camp could only be appeased by

^o Dion, l. lxxix, p. 1365. Herodian, l. v, p. 195-201. Hist.
August. p. 105. The last of the three historians seems to have fol-
lowed the best authors in his account of the revolution.

CHAP. the presence and authority of the popular youth.

VI.

Provoked at this new instance of their affection for his cousin, and their contempt for his person, the emperor ventured to punish some of the leaders of the mutiny. His unseasonable severity proved instantly fatal to his minions, his mother, and himself. Elagabalus was massacred by the indignant praetorians, his mutilated corpse dragged through the streets of the city, and thrown into the Tyber. His memory was branded with eternal infamy by the senate; the justice of whose decree has been ratified by posterity.^P

Accession
of Alexan-
der Seve-
rus.

In the room of Elagabalus, his cousin Alexander was raised to the throne by the praetorian guards. His relation to the family of Severus, whose name he assumed, was the same as that of his predecessor; his virtue and his danger had already endeared him to the Romans, and the eager liberality of the senate conferred upon him, in one day, the various titles and powers of the

^P The era of the death of Elagabalus, and of the accession of Alexander, has employed the learning and ingenuity of Pagi, Tillmont, Valsecchi, Vignoli, and Torre, bishop of Adria. The question is most assuredly intricate; but I will adhere to the authority of Dion, the truth of whose calculations is undeniable, and the purity of whose text is justified by the agreement of Xiphilin, Zosimus, and Cedrenus. Elagabalus reigned three years, nine months, and four days, from his victory over Macrinus, and was killed March 10, 222. But what shall we reply to the medals, undoubtedly genuine, which reckon the fifth year of his tribunician power? We shall reply, with the learned Valsecchi, that the usurpation of Macrinus was annihilated, and that the son of Caracalla dated his reign from his father's death. After resolving this great difficulty, the smaller knots of this question may be easily untied, or cut adrift.

imperial dignity.² But till Alexander was a man,^{VI.}
modest and dutiful youth, of only seventeen years
of age, the reins of government were in the hands
of two women, of his mother Mitiama and of
Meesa, his grandmother. After the death of the
latter, which occurred but a short time before the elevation
of Alexander, Meesa remained the sole regent
of her son and of the empire.

In every age and country, the wiser, ^{Power of} ~~the weaker~~
the stronger, of the two sexes, has usurped the
powers of the state, and confined the other to
the cares and pleasures of domestic life. In her-
editary monarchies, however, and especially in
those of modern Europe, the gallant spirit of
chivalry, and the law of succession, have accus-
tomed us to allow a singular exception; and a
woman is often acknowledged the absolute sove-
reign of a great kingdom, in which she would be
deemed incapable of exercising the smallest em-
ployment, civil or military. But as the Roman
emperors were still considered as the generals and
magistrates of the republic, their wives and moth-
ers, although distinguished by the name of Au-
gusta, were never associated to their personal no-
nours; and a female reign would have appeared
an inexpiable prodigy in the eyes of those primi-
tive Romans, who married without love, or loved
without delicacy and respect.³ The Naught

² Hist. August. p. 114. By this unusual precipitation, the senate
meant to confound the hopes of pretenders, and prevent the factions
of the armies.

³ Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman
people, in a public oration, that had kind nature allowed us to exist
without

CHAP. Agrippina inspired, indeed, to share the honours of the empire, which she had conferred on her son; but her mad ambition, detested by every citizen who felt for the dignity of Rome, was disappointed by the artful firmness of Seneca and Burrhus.¹ The good sense, or the indifference, of succeeding princes, restrained them from offending the prejudices of their subjects; and it was reserved for the profligate Elagabalus, to discharge the怒 of the senate, with the name of his mother Soemias, who was placed by the side of the consuls, and subscribed, as a regular member, the decrees of the legislative assembly. Her more prudent sister, Mamaea, declined the useless and odious prerogative, and a solemn law was enacted, excluding women for ever from the senate; and devoting to the infernal gods, the head of the branch by whom this sanction should be violated. The substance, not the pageantry of power was the object of Mamaea's manly ambition. She maintained an absolute and lasting empire over the mind of her son, and in this affection the mother could not brook a rival. Alexander, with her consent, married the daughter of a patrician; but his respect for his father-in-law, and love for the empress, were inconsistent with the tenderness or interest of Mamaea. The patrician was executed on the ready accus-

without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very noisome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. *Aulus Gallus*, i, 6. *Ad. 20. 6.*

¹ Tacit. *Annot.* xiii, 5.

² Hist. August. p. 102, 107.

sation of treason, and the wife of Alexander driven away with ignominy from the palace, and banished into Africa.^{VI.}

Notwithstanding the excesses of jealousy and cruelty, as well as some want of prudence, which distinguished Mammæa, it is agreed, the general tenor of her administration was equally for the benefit of herself and of the empire. With the approbation of the senate, she chose sixteen of the wisest and most virtuous senators, as a perpetual council of state, before whom every public business of moment was determined. The celebrated Tiberius, especially distinguished by his knowledge of, and his respect for, the laws of Rome, was at their head; and the prudent firmness of this aristocracy restored order and authority to the government. As soon as they had purged the city from foreign superstition and luxury, the remains of the capricious tyranny of Elagabalus, they applied themselves to remove his worthless creatures from every department of public administration, and to supply their places with men of virtue and ability. Learning, and the love of justice, became the only recommendation for civil offices. Valour, and the love of discipline,

^a Dion, l. lxxx, p. 1308. Herodian, l. vi, p. 206. Hist. August. p. 131. Herodian represents the patrician as innocent. The Augustan history, on the authority of Diodorus, condemns him, as guilty of a conspiracy against the life of Alexander. It is impossible to pronounce between them; but Dion is an irreproachable witness of the jealousy and cruelty of Mammæa toward the young emperor, whose hard fate Alexander lamented, but durst not oppose.

CHAP. THE EARLY QUALIFICATIONS FOR MILITARY EMPLOY.

Education and virtuous example of Alexander. But the most important care of Mamaea and her wise counsellors, was to form the character of the young emperor, on whose personal qualities the happiness or misery of the Roman world must ultimately depend. The fortunate soil assisted and even prevented, the hand of cultivation. An excellent understanding soon convinced Alexander of the advantages of virtue, the pleasure of knowledge, and the necessity of labour. A natural mildness and moderation of temper preserved him from the assaults of passion and the allurements of vice. His unalterable regard for his mother, and his esteem for the wise Ulpian, guarded his unexperienced youth from the points of flattery.

Journal of his ordinary life.

The simple journal of his ordinary occupations exhibits a pleasing picture of an accomplished emperor; and with some allowance for the difference of manners, might well deserve the imitation of modern princes. Alexander rose early; the first moments of the day were consecrated to private devotion, and his domestic chapel was filled with the images of those heroes, who, by improving or reforming human life, had deserved

* Herodian, I. vi, p. 102; Hist. August, p. 110. The latter author intimated, that when any law was to be passed, the council was assembled by a number of able lawyers and experienced senators, whose opinions were separately given, and taken down in writing.

† See his life, in the Augustan History. The undistinguishing compiler has buried these interesting ambitions under a load of trivial and unmeaning circumstances.

the grateful reverence of posterity. But as he ~~once~~
 deemed the service of mankind the most accept-
 able worship of the gods, the greatest part of his
 morning hours were employed in the church,
 where he discussed public affairs, and conversed
 privately with a patience and disengaged
 above measure. The dryness of business was
 relieved by the charms of literature; and a por-
 tion of time was always set apart for the favorite
 studies of poetry, history, and philosophy. The
 works of Virgil and Horace, the republics of
 Plato and Cicero, formed the same enlarged his
 understanding, and gave him the noble ideas
 of man and government. The exercises of the
 body succeeded to those of the mind; and Alex-
 ander, who was tall, active, and robust, sur-
 passed most of his equals in the gymnastic arts.
 Refreshed by the use of the bath and a slight din-
 ner, he resumed, with new vigour, the business
 of the day; and, till the hour of supper, the
 principal meal of the Romans, he was attended
 by his secretaries, with whom he read and an-
 swered the multitude of letters, memorials, and
 petitions, that must have been addressed to the
 master of the greatest part of the world. His
 table was served with the most frugal simplicity;
 and whenever he was at liberty to consult his
 own inclination, the company consisted of a few
 select friends, men of learning and virtue, amongst
 whom Ulpian was constantly invited. Their
 conversation was familiar and instructive; and the
 pauses were occasionally enlivened by the recital
 of some pleasing composition, which supplied the

CHAP. VI. place of the dancers, comedians, and even gladiators, so frequently summoned to the tables of the rich and luxurious Romans.² The dress of Alexander was plain and modest, his demeanour courteous and affable: at the proper hours his palace was open to all his subjects, but the voice of a crier was heard, as in the Eleusinian mysteries, pronouncing the same salutary admonition; “ Let none enter those holy walls, unless he is conscious of a pure and innocent mind.”

General happiness of the Roman world, A. D. 222—
235.

Such an uniform tenour of life, which left not a moment for vice or folly, is a better proof of the wisdom and justice of Alexander’s government, than all the trifling details preserved in the compilation of Lampridius. Since the accession of Commodus, the Roman world had experienced, during a term of forty years, the successive and various vices of four tyrants. From the death of Elagabalus, it enjoyed an auspicious calm of thirteen years. The provinces, relieved from the oppressive taxes invented by Caracalla and his pretended son, flourished in peace and prosperity, under the administration of magistrates, who were convinced by experience, that to deserve the love of the subjects, was their best and only method of obtaining the favour of their sovereign. While some gentle restraints were imposed on the innocent luxury of the Roman people, the price of provisions, and the interest of money, were reduced

² See the impudent satire of Juvenal.
Hist. August. p. 118.

by the paternal care of Alexander, whose prudent ^{CHAP.} liberality, without distressing the industrious, supplied the wants and amusements of the populace. The dignity, the freedom, the authority of the senate were restored; and every virtuous senator might approach the person of the emperor, with out fear, and without a blush.

The name of Antoninus, ennobled by the virtues of Pius and Marcus, had been communicated by adoption to the dissolute Verus, and by descent to the cruel Commodus. It became the honourable appellation of the sons of Severus, was bestowed on young Diadumenianus, and at length prostituted to the infamy of the high priest of Emesa. Alexander, though pressed by the studied, and perhaps sincere importunity of the senate, nobly refused the borrowed lustre of a name; whilst in his whole conduct he laboured to restore the glories and felicity of the age of the genuine Antonines.^b

In the civil administration of Alexander, wisdom was enforced by power, and the people, sensible of the public felicity, repaid their benevolent factor with their love and gratitude. There still remained a greater, a more necessary, but a more difficult enterprise; the reformation of the military order, whose interest and temper, con-

^a See in the Hist. August. p. 116, 117, the whole extract between Alexander and the senate, extracted from the journals of that assembly. It happened on the sixth of March, probably of the year 223, when the Romans had enjoyed, almost a twelvemonth, the blessings of his reign. Before the appellation of Antoninus was offered him as a title of honour, the senate waited to see whether Alexander would not assume it as a family name.

CHAP. firmed by long impunity, rendered them impen-
VI. tient of the restraints of discipline, and careless
of the blessings of public tranquillity. In the
execution of his design the emperor affected to
display his love, and to conceal his fear, of the
army. The most rigid economy in every other
branch of the administration, supplied a fund of
gold and silver for the ordinary pay and the ex-
traordinary rewards of the troops. In their
marches he relaxed the severe obligation of car-
rying seventeen days provision on their shoulders.
Ample magazines were formed along the public
roads, and as soon as they entered the enemy's
country, a numerous train of mules and camels
waited on their haughty laziness. As Alexander^{*}
despaired of correcting the luxury of his soldiers,
he attempted at least to direct it to objects of
martial pomp and ornament, fine horses, splen-
did armour, and shields enriched with silver and
gold. He shared whatever fatigues he was
obliged to impose, visited in person the sick and
wounded, preserved an exact register of their
services and his own gratitude, and expressed, on
every occasion, the warmest regard for a body of
men, whose welfare, as he affected to declare,
was so closely connected with that of the state.
By the most gentle arts he laboured to inspire
the fierce multitude with a sense of duty, and to
restore at least a faint image of that discipline to
which the Romans owed their empire over so
long a period.

* It was a favourite saying of the emperor's, Se milites magis
serve, quam servari; a good motto indeed in his case. Hist. Au-
gust. p. 130.

many other nations, as was the end more powerful than themselves. But his prudence was vain, his courage fatal, and the attempt towards a reformation served only to increase the ill it was meant to cure.

The praetorian guards were attached to the seditions of the praetorian guards, and murder of Ulpian. The praetorian guards were attached to the youth of Alexander. They loved him as a tender pupil, whom they had saved from a tyrant's fury, and placed on the imperial throne. Their amiable prince was sensible of the obligation; but as his gratitude was restrained within the limits of moderation and justice, they soon were more dissatisfied with the virtues of Alexander, than they had ever been with the vices of Elagabalus. Their prefect, the wise Ulpian, was the friend of the laws and of the people; he was considered as the enemy of the soldiers, and to his pernicious counsels every scheme of reformation was imputed. Some trifling accident blew up their discontent into a furious mutiny; and a civil war raged during three days, in Rome, whilst the life of that excellent minister was suspended by the grateful people. Terrified at length, by the sight of some houses in flames, and by the threats of a general conflagration, the people yielded with a sigh, and left the virtuous but unfortunate Ulpian to his fate. He was pursued into the imperial palace, and massacred at the feet of his master, who vainly strove to cover him with the purple, and to obtain his pardon from the inexorable soldiers. Such was the deplorable weakness of government, that the emperor was unable to revenge his murdered

CHAP. friend and his insulted dignity, without stooping
 VI. to the arts of patience and dissimulation. Epagathus, the principal leader of the mutiny, was removed from Rome, by the honourable employment of prefect of Egypt; from that high rank he was gently degraded to the government of Crete; and when, at length, his popularity among the guards was effaced by time and absence, Alexander ventured to inflict the ~~punishment of his crimes~~⁴. Under the reign of a just and virtuous prince, the tyranny of the army threatened with instant death the most faithful ministers, who were suspected of intention to correct their intolerable disorder.

Danger of Dion Cassius.
 Dion Cas-
 sius.

The historian Dion Cassius had commanded the Pannonian legions with the spirit of ancient discipline. Their brethren of Rome, embracing the common cause of military licence, demanded the head of the reformer. Alexander, however, instead of yielding to their seditious clamours, shewed a just sense of his merit and services, by appointing him his colleague in the consulship, and defraying from his own treasury the expense of that vain dignity: but as it was justly apprehended, that if the soldiers beheld him with the ensigns of his office, they would revenge the insult in his blood, the nominal first magistrate of the state retired, by the emperor's advice, from

⁴ Though the author of the life of ~~Alexander~~ (Hist. August. ad 250) mentions the sedition raised against Ulpian by the soldiers, he conceals the catastrophe, as it might uncover a weakness in the administration of his hero. From this designed omission, we may judge of the weight and candour of that author.

the city, and spent the greatest part of his consulship at his villas in Campania.^c

The lenity of the emperor confirmed the insolence of the troops; the legions imitated the example of the ~~guards~~, and defended their prerogative of ~~luxury~~^f with the same furious obstinacy. The administration of Alexander was an unavailing struggle against the corruption of his age: In Illyricum, in Moesia, in Armenia, in Mesopotamia, in Germany, fresh mutinies perpetually broke out; his officers were murdered, his authority was insulted, and his life at last sacrificed to the fierce discontent of the army.^e One particular fact well deserves to be recorded, as it illustrates the manners of the ~~guards~~^{of the emperor} troops, and exhibits a singular instance of their return to a sense of duty and obedience. Whilst the emperor lay at Antioch, in his Persian expedition, the particulars of which we shall hereafter relate, the punishment of some soldiers, who had been discovered in the baths of women, excited a sedition in the legion to which they belonged. Alexander ascended his tribunal, and, with a modest firmness, represented to the ~~guards~~^{mild} multitude the absolute necessity, as well as his inflexible resolution, of correcting the vices introduced by his impure predecessor, and of maintaining the discipline, which could not be relaxed without the ruin of the Roman name and empire. Their clamours interrupted his mild ex-

* For an account of Ulpian's fate, and his own danger, see the mutilated conclusion of Dion's history, l. lxxx, p. 1371.

^f Annot. Reimar. ad Dion Cassius, l. lxxx, p. 1369.

CHAP. postulation. " Reserve your shouts," said the
 VI. undaunted emperor, " till you take the field
 against the Persians, the Germans, and the
 Sarmatians. Be silent in the presence of your
 sovereign and benefactor, who bestows upon
 you the corn, the clothing, and the money of
 the provinces. Be silent, or I shall no longer
 style you soldiers, but *citizens*,^{*} if those,
 deed, who disclaim the laws of Rome, deserve
 to be ranked among the meateat of the pe-
 ple." These menaces inflamed the fury of the
 legion, and their brandished arms already threat-
 ened his person. " Your courage," resumed the
 intrepid Alexander, " would be more nobly dis-
 played in the field of battle; me you may de-
 stroy, you cannot intimidate; and the severe
 justice of the republic would punish your crime,
 and revenge my death." The legion still per-
 sisted in their obstinacy, when the emperor
 pronounced, with a loud voice, the decisive sen-
 tence, " *Citizens!* lay down your arms, and de-
 part in peace to your respective habitations." The
 tempest was instantly appeased; the soldiers,
 filled with grief and shame, silently confessed the
 justice of their punishment, and the power of dis-
 cipline, yielded up their arms and military em-
 signs, and retired in confusion, not to their camp,
 but to the several inns of the city. Alexander
 enjoyed, during thirty days, the edifying spec-

* Julius Caesar had appeased a sedition with the same word *quieta*, which, thus opposed to *soldiers*, was used in a sense of contempt, and reduced the offenders to the less honourable condition of mere *citizens*. Tacit. Annal. 1, 43.

trace of their repentance; how did he restore CHAP.
them to their former rank in the army, till he VI.
had punished with death those traitors whose
connivance had obtained the victory? The
grateful legion ~~had been~~^{had been} emperor whilst living,
and revengeable when dead.¹

The resolutions of the multitude generally de-Defects of
pend on a moment; ~~not the caprice~~^{his reign} and charac-
might equally determine the sedition. Legions
lay down their arms at the emperor's feet, or to
plunge them into his breast. Perhaps, if the
~~singular transaction~~^{penetration} had been investigated by the
secret causes which, on that occasion, moti-
vized the boldness of the prince, and command-
ed the obedience of the troops; and perhaps, if
it had been related by a judicious historian, we
should find this action, worthy of Caesar himself,
reduced nearer to the level of probability, and the
common standard of the character of Alexander
Severus. The abilities of that amiable prince
seem to have been inadequate to the difficulties
of his situation, the firmness of his conduct su-
perior to the purity of his intentions. His vices,
as well as the vices of Elagabalus, con-
tracted a tincture of weakness and effeminacy
from the soft climate of Syria, of which he was
a native, though he blushed at his foreign origin,
and listened with a vain complacency to the fal-
tering genealogists, who derived his race from

C H A P. the ancient stock of Roman nobility.¹ The pride and avarice of his mother cast a shade over the glories of his reign, and, by exacting from his riper years the same dutiful obedience which she had justly claimed from his unexperienced youth, Mamaea exposed both her son's character and her own.² The fatigues of the Persian war irritated the military discontent; the unsuccessful event degraded the reputation of the emperor as a general, and every circumstance hastened, a revolution, which disengaged the Roman empire with a long series of intestine calamities.

Digression — The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new system of policy introduced by the house of Severus had all contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army, and to obliterate the fine image of law and liberty that was still impressed

¹ From the Metelli. Hist. August. p. 119. The choice was judicious. In one short period of twelve years, the Metelli could reckon seven consulships and five triumphs. See Velleius Paterculus, &c., and the Fasti.

² The life of Alexander, in the Augustan history, is the mere idea of a perfect prince, an awkward imitation of the Cyropaedia. The account of his reign, as given by Herodian, is full of the most execrable falsehoods, with the exception of the history of the age, and, in point of the most invidious particulars, confirmed by the decisive fragments of Dion. Yet, from a very paltry prejudice, the greater number of our modern writers abuse Herodian, and copy the Augustan history. See Messrs. de Tillmont and Wotke. From the opposite prejudice, the emperor Julian (in Cæsar. p. 315) dwells with sensible satisfaction on the enormous weakness of the Syrians, and the ridiculous avarice of their soldier.

on the minds of the Romans. This internal change, which undermined the foundations of the empire, we have endeavoured to explain with some degree of order and perspicuity. The personal character of the emperor, his victories, laws, gifts, and fortunes, can interest us no farther than as they are connected with the general history of the decline and fall of the monarchy. Our constant attention to that great object will not suffer us to overlook a most important edict of Antoninus Caracalla, which communicated to all the inhabitants of the empire the rights and privileges of Roman citizens. His unbounded liberality flowed not, however, from the sentiments of a generous mind; it was the sordid result of avarice, and will naturally be illustrated by some observations on the finances of that state, from the victorious ages of the commonwealth to the reign of Alexander Severus.

The siege of Veii in Tuscany, the first considerable enterprise of the Romans, was protracted to the tenth year; ^{Establish-} ^{ment} not by the strength of the place, than by the unskillfulness of the siegers. The unaccustomed hardships of a winter campaign, at the distance of near twenty miles from home, required more than common encouragements; and the senate wisely prevented

¹ According to the more accurate Dionysius, the city itself was only an hundred stadia, or twelve miles and a half from Rome, though some out-posts might be advanced farther on the side of Etruria. Nardini, in a professed treatise, has combated the popular opinion, and the authority of two popes, and has removed Veii from Civita Castellana to a little spot called Isola, in the midst of a lake between Rome and the lake Bracciano.

CHAP. VI. the labours of the people, by the institutions of a regular pay for the soldiers, which was levied by a general tribute, assessed according to an equitable proportion on the property of the citizens.^m During more than two hundred years after the conquest of Veii, the victories of the republic added less to the wealth than to the power of Rome. The states of Italy paid their tribute in military service only, and the vast sum both by sea and land, which was exerted in the Punic wars, was maintained at the expense of the Romans themselves. That high-spirited people (such is often the generous enthusiasm of freedom) cheerfully submitted to the most exorbitant, but voluntary burdens, in the just confidence that they should speedily enjoy the rich harvests of their labours. Their expectations were disappointed. In the course of a few years the riches of Syracuse, of Carthage, of Marseilles, and of Asia were brought in triumph into

The treasures of Perseus alone amounted to two millions sterling, and the Roman people, the sovereign of so many nations, was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes.ⁿ The increasing revenue of the provinces was sufficient to defray the ordinary establishment of state and government; and the superfluous sum of gold and silver was deposited in the temple of

^m See the fourth and fifth books of Livy. In the Roman Constitution property, power, and taxation, were commensurate with each other.

ⁿ Plin. Hist. Natur. l. xxviii. c. 3. Cicero de Offic. ii. 22. March. in P. Manili. p. 273.

Saturn, and reserved for any unforeseen emergency of the state.^o

CHAR.

VI.

History has never perhaps suffered a greater or more irreparable injury, than in the loss of the curious register bequeathed by Augustus to the senate, in which that experienced prince so accurately balanced the revenues and expences of the Roman empire.^p Deprived of this clear and comprehensive estimate, we are reduced to collect a few imperfect hints from such of the ancients as have accidentally turned aside from the splendid to the more useful parts of history. We are informed that, by the conquests of Pompey, the tributes of Asia were raised from fifty to one hundred and thirty-five millions of drachms; or about four millions and a half sterling.^q Under the last and most indolent of the Ptolemies, the revenue of Egypt is said to have amounted to twelve thousand five hundred talents; a sum equivalent to more than two millions and a half of our money, but which was afterwards considerably improved by the more exact economy of the Romans, and the increase of the trade of Ethiopia and India.^r Gaul was enriched by rapine, as Egypt was by commerce, and the tributes of those two great provinces have been compared as nearly equal to each

^o See a fine description of this accumulated wealth of ages, in Lucan's Phars. I. iii., v. 155, &c.

^p Tacit. in Annal. i. 11. It seems to have existed in the time of Appian.

^q Plutarch. in Pompeio, p. 642.

^r Strabo, I. xvii, p. 798.

CHAP. other in value.^{*} The ten thousand Euboic or
 VL Phoenician talents, about four millions ster-
 of Africa, ling,^t which vanquished Carthage was condemn-
 ed to pay within the term of fifty years, were
 a slight acknowledgment of the superiority of
 Rome,^u and cannot bear the least proportion
 with the taxes afterwards raised both on the lands
 and on the persons of the inhabitants, when the
 fertile coast of Africa was reduced into a pro-
 vince.^v

Spain, Spain, by a very singular fatality, was the Peru and Mexico of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phoenicians, and the oppression of the simple natives, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, form an exact type of the more recent history of Spanish America.^w The Phoenicians were acquainted only with the sea-coast of Spain; avarice, as well as ambition, carried the arms of Rome and Carthage into the heart of the country, and almost every part of the soil was found pregnant with copper, silver, and gold. Mention is made of a mine near Cartagena, which yielded every day twenty-five

* *Velleius Patreculus*, I. ii, c. 89. He seems to give the preference to the resources of Gaul.

^t The Euboic, the Phoenician, and the Alexandrian talents were double in weight to the Attic. See Hooper on ancient weights and measures, p. iv, c. 5. It is very probable that the same talent was carried from Tyre to Carthage.

^u Polyb. I. xv, c. 2.

^v *Diodorus Siculus*, I. v. A wall was built by the Phoenicians, a little more than a thousand years before Christ. See *Vell. Patet.* i, 2.

^w *Ancient in Punicis*, p. 84.

thousand drachms of silver, or about three hundred thousand pounds a-year.^a Twenty thousand pound weight of gold was annually received from the provinces of Austria, Gallicia, and Lusitania.^b

We want both leisure and materials to pursue of the isle
this curious inquiry through the many potent
states that were annihilated in the Roman empire.
Some notion, however, may be formed of the
revenue of the provinces where considerable
wealth had been deposited by nature, or collected
by man, if we observe the severe attention that
was directed to the abodes of solitude and sterility.
Augustus once received a petition from
the inhabitants of Gyarus, humbly praying that
they might be relieved from one-third of their
excessive impositions. Their whole tax amounted
indeed to no more than one hundred and fifty
drachms, or about five pounds: but Gyarus was
a little island, or rather a rock of the Ægean
sea, destitute of fresh water and every necessary
of life, and inhabited only by a few wretched
fishermen.^b

From the faint glimmerings of such doubtful Amount of
and scattered lights we should be inclined to the reve-
believe, 1st, That (with every fair allowance for
nue.

^a Strabo. L iii, p. 148.

^b Plin. Hist. Natur. I. xxxiii, c. 3. He mentions likewise a silver mine in Dalmatia, that yielded every day fifty pounds to the state.

^b Strabo, L x, p. 485. Tacit. Annal. iii, 69, and iv, 30. See in Tournefort (*Voyages au Levant*, lettre viii), a very lively picture of the actual misery of Gyarus.

CHAP. the difference of times and circumstances) the
 VI. general income of the Roman provinces could
 seldom amount to less than fifteen or twenty
 millions of our money; and, 2dly, That so
 ample a revenue must have been fully adequate
 to all the expences of the moderate government
 instituted by Augustus, whose court was the mo-
 dest family of a private senator, and whose mili-
 tary establishment was calculated for the defence
 of the frontiers, without any aspiring views of
 conquest, or any serious apprehension of a foreign
 invasion.

Taxes on
 Roman ci-
 tizens in-
 stituted by
 Augustus.

Notwithstanding the seeming probability of
 both these conclusions, the latter of them at least
 is positively disowned by the language and con-
 duct of Augustus. It is not easy to determine
 whether, on this occasion, he acted as the com-
 mon father of the Roman world, or ~~as the op-~~
 pressor of liberty; whether he wished to relieve
 the provinces, or to impoverish the senate and
 the equestrian order. But no sooner had he
 assumed the reins of government, than he fre-
 quently intimated the insufficiency of the tributes,
 and the necessity of throwing an equitable pro-
 portion of the public burden upon Rome and
 Italy. In the prosecution of this unpopular de-
 sign, he advanced, however, by cautious and
 well-weighed steps. The introduction of customs
 was followed by the establishment of an excise,

* Epipius de magnitudine Regum (c. 2, c. 3) computes the re-
 venue at one hundred and fifty millions of gold crowns; but his
 whole book, though learned and ingenious, betrays a very heated
 imagination.

and the scheme of taxation was completed by an <sup>CHAR.
VI.</sup>
artful assessment on the real and personal property of the Roman citizens, who had been exempted from any kind of contribution above a century and a half.

1. In a great empire like that of Rome, ^{the cus-}
tural balance of money must have gradually es-
tablished itself. It has been already observed, that
~~as the wealth of the provinces was transmitted to~~
the capital by the strong hand of conquest and power; so a considerable part of it was restored to the ~~industrious provinces~~ by the gentle influence of commerce and arts. In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were im-
posed on every kind of merchandise, which through a thousand channels flowed to the great centre of opulence and luxury; and in whatso-
ever manner the law was expressed, it was the Roman purchaser, and not the provincial mer-
chant, who paid the tax.⁴ The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity; and we have a right to suppose that the variation was directed by the unalterable maxims of policy, that a higher duty was fixed on the articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the produc-
tions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the empire, were treated with more indulgence than was shewn to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular commerce of Arabia and

⁴ Tacit. Annal. xlii, 31.

CHAP. India. **VI.** There is still extant a long but imperfect catalogue of eastern commodities, which about the time of Alexander Severus were subject to the payment of duties; cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, and the whole tribe of aromatics, a great variety of precious stones, among which the diamond was the most remarkable for its price, and the emerald for its beauty.¹ Parthian and Babylonian leather, cottons, silks, both raw and manufactured, ebony, ivory, and eunuchs.² We may observe that the use and value of those effeminate slaves gradually rose with the decline of the empire.

The excise. II. The excise, introduced by Augustus after the civil wars, was extremely moderate, but it was general. It seldom exceeded one *per cent.*; but it comprehended whatever was sold in the markets or by public auction, from the most considerable purchase of lands and houses, to those minute objects which can only derive a value from their infinite multitude, and daily consumption. Such a tax, as it affects the body of the people, has ever been the occasion of clamour and discontent. An emperor well acquainted

¹ Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. vi, c. 23, l. xii, c. 18). His observation, that the Indian commodities were sold at Rome at a hundred times their original price, may give us some notion of the produce of the customs, since that original price amounted to more than eight hundred thousand pounds.

² The ancients were unacquainted with the art of cutting diamonds.

³ M. Bouchaud, in his treatise de l'impôt chez les Romains, has transcribed this catalogue from the Digest, and attempts to illustrate it by a very prolix commentary.

with the wants and resources of the state, was obliged to declare by a public edict, that the support of the army depended in a great measure on the produce of the excise.¹

III. When Augustus resolved to establish a permanent military force for the defence of his government against foreign and domestic enemies, he instituted a peculiar treasury for the pay of the soldiers, the rewards of the veterans, and the extraordinary expences of war. The ample revenue of the excise, though peculiarly appropriated to those uses, was found inadequate. To supply the deficiency, the emperor suggested a new tax of five per cent. on all legacies and inheritances. But the nobles of Rome were more tenacious of property than of freedom. Their indignant murmurs were received by Augustus with his usual temper. He candidly referred the whole business to the senate, and exhorted them to provide for the public service by some other expedient of a less odious nature. They were divided and perplexed. He insinuated to them, that their obstinacy would oblige him to propose a general land-tax and capitation. They acquiesced in silence.² The new imposition on legacies and inheritances was, however, mitigated by some restrictions. It did not take place unless the object was of a certain value,

¹ Tacit. Annal. i, 78. Two years afterwards, the reduction of the poor kingdom of Cappadocia gave Tiberius a pretence for diminishing the excise to one half; but the relief was of very short duration.

² Dion Cassius, l. iv, p. 794, l. vii, p. 825.

CHAP. most probably of fifty or an hundred pieces of gold;² nor could it be exacted from the nearest of kin on the father's side.³ When the rights of nature and poverty were thus secured, it seemed reasonable, that a stranger, or a distant relation, who acquired an unexpected accession of fortune, should cheerfully resign a twentieth part of it, for the benefit of the state.⁴

*Suited to
the laws
and man-
ners.*

Such a tax, plentiful as it must prove in every wealthy community, was most happily suited to the situation of the Romans, who could frame their arbitrary wills, according to the dictates of reason or caprice, without any restraint from the modern fetters of entails and settlements. From various causes the partiality of paternal affection often lost its influence over the stern patriots of the commonwealth, and the dissolute nobles of the empire; and if the father bequeathed to his son the fourth part of his estate, he removed all complaint.⁵ But a rich childless old man was a domestic tyrant, and his power increased with his years and infirmities. A servile crowd, in which he frequently reckoned praetors and consuls, courted his smiles, pampered his avarice, applauded his follies, served his passions, and waited with impatience for his

² The sum is only fixed by conjecture.

³ As the Roman law subsisted for many ages, the cognati, or relations on the mother's side, were not called to the succession. This harsh institution was gradually undermined by humanity, and finally abolished by Justinian.

⁴ *Adm. Punicas, c. 27.*

⁵ See *Res Gestae Divi Augusti, Prose Romani, l. ii.*

death. The arts of attendance and flattery were ~~char-~~
 formed into a most lucrative science; those who
 professed it acquired a peculiar appellation; and
 the whole city, according to the lively descrip-
 tions of satirists, was divided between two parties,
 the hunters and their game.^a Yet, while so
 many unjust and extravagant wills were every
 day dictated by cupidity and subscribed by folly,
 a few were the result of rational esteem and
 virtuous gratitude. Cicero, who had so often de-
 fended the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens,
 was rewarded by his friends to the amount of
 an hundred and seventy thousand pounds;^b and
 do the friends of the younger Pliny seem to
 have been less generous to that amiable orator.^c
 Whatever was the motive of the testator, the
 treasury claimed, without distinction, the twen-
 tieth part of his estate; and in the course of two
 or three generations, the whole property of the
 subject must have gradually passed through the
 coffers of the public treasury.

In the first and greatest period of the empire, from a desire of popularity, per-
 haps from a blind impulse of benevolence, con-
 ceived a wish of abolishing the oppression of
 the customs and excise. The wisest senators ap-
 plauded his magnanimity; but they diverted him

^a Horat. l. ii. sat. v. Petron. c. 116. &c. Plini. 2. ii. epist. 20.

^b Closio in Phillip. ii. c. 16.

^c See his epistles. Every such will give him an occasion of dis-
 playing his reverence to the dead, and his justice to the living. He
 reconciled both, in his behaviour to a son who had been disinher-
 ited by his mother (v. 1).

CHAP. from the execution of a design, which would
 VI. have dissolved the strength and resources of the
 republic.¹ Had it indeed been possible to realize
 this dream of fancy, such princes as Trajan
 and the Antonines would surely have embraced
 with ardour the glorious opportunity of con-
 ferring so signal an obligation on mankind. Sa-
 tisfied, however, with alleviating the public bur-
 den, they attempted not to remove it. The
 mildness and precision of their laws ascertained
 the rule and measure of taxation, and protected
 the subject of every rank against arbitrary inter-
 pretations, antiquated claims, and the insolent
 vexation of the farmers of the revenue.² For
 it is somewhat singular that, in every age, the
 best and wisest of the Roman governors per-
 severed in this pernicious method of collecting
 the principal branches at least of the excise and
 customs.³

*Edict of
Caracalla.*

The sentiments, and, indeed, the situation of Caracalla, were very different from those of the Antonines. Inattentive, or rather averse to the welfare of his people, he found himself under the necessity of gratifying the insatiate avarice, which he had excited in the army. Of the several impositions introduced by Augustus, the twentieth on inheritances and legacies was the most fruitful, as well as the most comprehensive. As its

¹ Tacit. Annal. xiii. 50. *Esprit des Lois*, I. vii. c. 19.

² See Pliny's *Panegyric*, the *Augustan History*, and Burman de Vectigal, *passim*.

³ The tributes (property so called) were not farmed, since the good princes often remitted many millions of arrears.

influence was not confined to Rome or Italy, the CHAP.
produce continually increased with the gradual
extension of the Roman City. The new citi-
zенs, though charged on equal terms,^{*} with the
payment of ~~new taxes~~, which had not affected
them as subjects, derived an ample compen-
sation from the rank they obtained, the privileges
they acquired, and the fair prospect of honours
and fortune that was thrown open to their
ambition. But the favour which implied a distinc-
tion was lost in the prodigality of Caracalla, and
the reluctant provincials were compelled to assume
the vain title, and the real obligations, of Roman
citizens. Nor was the rapacious son of Severus
contented with such a measure of taxation as had
appeared sufficient to his moderate predecessors.
Instead of a twentieth, he exacted a tenth of all
legacies and inheritances; and during his reign
(for the ancient proportion was restored after his
death) he crushed alike every part of the empire
under the weight of his iron sceptre.^x

When all the provinces became liable to the
peculiar impositions of Roman citizens, they
seemed to acquire a legal exemption from the
tributes which they had paid in their former
condition of subjects. Such were not the maxims
of government adopted by Caracalla and his
pretended son. The old as well as the new taxes
were, at the same time, levied in the provinces.

* The situation of the new citizens is minutely described by Pliny
(Panegyric, c. 37, 38, 39). Trajan published a law very much in
their favour.

^x Dion, l. lxxvii, p. 1295.

The free-
dom of the
city given
to all the
provinci-
als, for the
purpose of
taxation.

CHAP. It was reserved for the virtue of Alexander to
VI. relieve them, in a great measure, from this intolerable grievance, by reducing the tributes to a thirtieth part of the sum exacted at the time of his accession.¹ It is impossible to conjecture the motive that engaged him to spare so trifling a remnant of the public evil; but the noxious weed, which had not been totally eradicated, again sprang up with the most luxuriant growth, and, in the succeeding age, darkened the Roman world with its deadly shade. In the course of this history, we shall be too often summoned to explain the land-tax, the capitulation, and the heavy contributions of corn, wine, oil, and meat, which were exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital.

Conse-
quences of
the uni-
versal free-
dom of
Rome. As long as Rome and Italy were respected as the centre of government, a national spirit was preserved by the ancient, and insensibly imbibed by the adopted, citizens. The principal commands of the army were filled by men who had received a liberal education, were well instructed in the advantages of laws and letters, and who had risen, by equal steps, through the regular succession of civil and military honours.² To their influence and example we may partly ascribe the modest obedience of the legions during the two first centuries of the imperial history,

¹ He who paid ten *aurei*, the usual tribute, was charged with no more than the third part of an *aureus*, and proportional pieces of gold were coined by Alexander's order. Hist. August. p. 127, with the commentary of *Sophocles*.

² See the lives of *Agricola*, *Vespasian*, *Trajan*, *Severus*, and his three competitors, and indeed of all the eminent men of those times.

But when the last enclosure of the Roman ~~CHARTA~~
constitution was trampled down by Caracalla,
~~VI.~~
the separation of professions gradually succeeded
to the distinction of ranks. The more polished
citizens of the internal provinces were alone qua-
lified to act as lawyers and magistrates. The
rougher trade of arms was abandoned to the pe-
asants and barbarians of the frontiers, who knew
no country but their camp, no science but that of
war, no civil laws, and scarcely those of military
discipline. With bloody hands, savage manners,
and desperate resolutions, they sometimes guard-
ed, but much oftener subverted, the throne of
the emperors.

CHAP. VII.

The elevation and tyranny of Maximin.—Rebellion in Africa and Italy, under the authority of the senate.—Civil wars and seditions.—Violent deaths of Maximin and his son, of Maximus and Balbinus, and of the three Gordians.—Usurpation and secular games of Philip.

CHAP. VII. Of the various forms of government, which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule. Is it possible to relate, without an indignant smile, that on the father's decease, the property of a nation, like that of a drove of oxen, descends to his infant son, as yet unknown to mankind and to himself; and that the bravest warriors and the wisest statesmen, relinquishing their natural right to empire, approach the royal cradle with bended knees and protestations of inviolable fidelity? Satire and declamation may paint these obvious topics in the most dazzling colours, but our more serious thoughts will respect a useful prejudice, that establishes a rule of succession, independent of the passions of mankind; and we shall cheerfully acquiesce in any expedient which deprives the multitude of the dangerous, and indeed the ideal, power of giving themselves a master.

In the cool shade of retirement, we may easily devise imaginary forms of government, in which

and solid
advantages
of heredi-
tary suc-
cession.

the sceptre shall be constantly bestowed on the most worthy, by the free and incorrupt suffrage of the whole community. Experience overturns these airy fabrics, and teaches us, that in a large society, the election of a monarch can never devolve to the wisest, or to the most numerous, part of the people. The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens; but the temper of soldiers, habituated at once to violence and to slavery, renders them very unfit guardians of a legal, or even a civil, constitution. Justice, humanity, or political wisdom, are qualities they are too little acquainted with in themselves, to appreciate them in others. Valour will acquire their esteem, and liberality will purchase their suffrage; but the first of these merits is often lodged in the most savage breasts; the latter can only exert itself at the expence of the public; and both may be turned against the possessor of the throne, by the ambition of a daring rival.

The superior prerogative of birth, which it has obtained the sanction of time and popular opinion, is the plainest and least invidious of all distinctions among mankind. The acknowledged right extinguishes the hopes of faction, and the conscious security disarms the cruelty of the monarch. To the firm establishment of this idea, we owe the peaceful succession and mild administration of European monarchies. To the defect of it, we must attribute the frequent civil

Want of it
in the Ro-
man em-
pire pro-
ductive of
the greatest
calamities.

CHAP. wars, through which an Asiatic despot is obliged
VII. to cut his way to the throne of his fathers. Yet even in the East, the sphere of contention is usually limited to the princes of the reigning house; and as soon as the more fortunate competitor has removed his brethren, by the sword and the bow-string, he no longer entertains any jealousy of his meaner subjects. But the Roman empire, after the authority of the senate had sunk into contempt, was a vast scene of confusion. The royal, and even noble, families of the provinces, had long since been led in triumph before the car of the haughty republicans. The ancient families of Rome had successively fallen beneath the tyranny of the Cæsars; and whilst those princes were shackled by the forms of a commonwealth, and disappointed by the repeated failure of their posterity,^{*} it was impossible that any idea of hereditary succession should have taken root in the minds of their subjects. The right to the throne, which none could claim from birth, every one assumed from merit. The daring hopes of ambition were set loose from the salutary restraints of law and prejudice, and the meanest of mankind might, without folly, entertain a hope of being raised, by valour and fortune, to a rank in the army, in which a single crime would enable him to wrest the sceptre of the world from his feeble and unpopular master. After the mur-

* There had been no example of three successive generations of the Cæsars; only three brothers, who succeeded their fathers. The marriages of the Cæsars frequently, during the permission, and the frequent practice of divorce, were generally unfruitful.

der of Alexander Severus, and the elevation of CHAP.
Maximin, no emperor could think himself safe VII.
upon the throne, and every barbarian peasant of
the frontier might aspire to that august, but dan-
gerous station.

About thirty-two years before that event, the emperor Severus, returning from an eastern expe-
dition, halted in Thrace, to celebrate, with mi-
litary games, the birth-day of his younger son,
Geta. The country flocked in crowds to behold
their sovereign, and a young barbarian of gigantic
stature, earnestly solicited, in his rude dialect,
that he might be allowed to contend for the prize
of wrestling. As the pride of discipline would
have been disgraced in the overthrow of a Roman
soldier by a Thracian peasant, he was matched
with the stoutest followers of the camp, sixteen
of whom he successively laid on the ground.
His victory was rewarded by some trifling gifts,
and a permission to enlist in the troops. The
next day, the happy barbarian was distinguished
above a crowd of recruits, running and vaulting
after the fashion of his country. As soon as he
perceived that he had attracted the emperor's
notice, he instantly ran up to his horse, and fol-
lowed him on foot, without the least appearance
of fatigue, in a long and rapid career. "Thra-
"eian," said Severus with astonishment, "art
" thou disposed to wrestle after thy race?" Most
willingly, sir, replied the unwearied youth; and,
almost in a breath, overthrew seven of the
strongest soldiers in the army. A gold collar was

Birth and
fortunes of
Maximin.

CHAP. the prize of his matchless vigour and activity, and
 VII. he was immediately appointed to serve in the horse-
 guards who always attended on the person of the
 sovereign.^b

His mili- Maximin, for that was his name, though born
 tary service on the territories of the empire, descended from
 and ho- a mixed race of barbarians. His father was a
 mours. Goth; and his mother of the nation of the Alani. He displayed, on every occasion, a valour equal to his strength; and his native fierceness was soon tempered or disguised by the knowledge of the world. Under the reign of Severus and his son, he obtained the rank of centurion, with the favour and esteem of both those princes, the former of whom was an excellent judge of merit. Gratitude forbade Maximin to serve under the assassin of Caracalla. Honour taught him to decline the effeminate insults of Elagabalus. On the accession of Alexander he returned to court, ~~and was placed by that prince in a station useful~~ to the service, and honourable to himself. The fourth legion, to which he was appointed tribune, soon became, under his care, the best disciplined of the whole army. With the general applause of the soldiers, who bestowed on their favourite hero the names of Ajax and Hercules, he was successively promoted to the first military command;^c and had not he still retained too much

^b Hist. August. p. 138.

^c Hist. August. p. 140. Histor. Aug. v. p. 222. Aurelius Victor. By comparing these authors, it should seem that Maximin had the particular command of the Triballian horse, with the general

of his savage origin, the emperor might perhaps have given his own sister in marriage to the son of Maximin.⁴

VII.

Instead of securing his fidelity, these favours served only to incite the ambition of the Thracian peasant, who deemed his fortune inadequate to his merit; as long as he was constrained to acknowledge a superior. Though a stranger to real wisdom, he was not devoid of a useful cunning, which shewed him that the emperor had lost the affection of the army, and taught him to improve their discontent to his own advantage. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of princes, and to accuse even their virtues, by artfully confounding them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity. The troops listened with pleasure to the emissaries of Maximin. They blushed at their own ignominious patience, which, during thirteen years, had supported the vexations discipline imposed by an effeminate Syrian, the timid slave of ~~the~~^{of} mother and of the ~~sun~~. It was time, they cried. In ~~cold~~ ^{any} that ~~wishes~~ phantom of the civil power, and to elect for ~~their~~ prince and general a real soldier, educated in camps, exercised in war, who would assert the glory, and distribute among his companions the treasures of the empire. A great

general commission of disciplining the regiments of the whole army. His biographer ought to have marked, with more care, his exploits, and the successive steps of his military promotions.

⁴ See the original letter of Alexander Severus, Hist. August. p. 149.

CHAP. VII. army was at that time assembled on the banks of the Rhine, under the command of the emperor himself, who, almost immediately after his return from the Persian war, had been obliged to march against the barbarians of Germany. The important care of training and reviewing the new levies was intrusted to Maximin. One day, as he entered the field of exercise, the troops, either from a sudden impulse, or a formed conspiracy, saluted him emperor, silenced by their loud acclamations his obstinate refusal, and hastened to consummate their rebellion by the murder of Alexander Severus.

A. D. 235.
March 19.

Murder of
Alexander
Severus.

The circumstances of his death are variously related. The writers, who supposed that he died in ignorance of the ingratitude and ambition of Maximin, affirm that, after taking a frugal repast in the sight of the army, he retired to sleep; and that, about the seventh hour of the day, a party of his own guards broke into the imperial tent, and, with many wounds, assassinated their virtuous and unsuspecting prince. If we credit another, and indeed a more probable account, Maximin was invested with the purple by a numerous detachment, at the distance of several miles from the head-quarters; and he trusted for success rather to the secret wishes, than to the

* Hist. August. p. 135. I have softened some of the most improbable circumstances of this wretched biographer. From this ill-worded narration, it should seem, that the prince's buffoon having accidentally entered the tent, and awakened the slumbering monarch, the fear of punishment urged him to persuade the disaffected soldiers to commit the murder.

public declarations of the great army. Alexander had sufficient time to awaken a faint sense of loyalty among his troops; but their reluctant professions of fidelity quickly vanished on the appearance of Maximin, who declared himself the friend and advocate of the military order, and was unanimously acknowledged emperor of the Romans by the applauding legions. The son of Mamaea, betrayed and deserted, withdrew into his tent, desirous at least to conceal his approaching fate from the insults of the multitude. He was soon followed by a tribune and some centurions, the ministers of death; but instead of receiving with manly resolution the inevitable stroke, his unavailing cries and entreaties disgraced the last moments of his life, and converted into contempt some portion of the just pity which his innocence and misfortunes must inspire. His mother Mamaea, whose pride and avarice he loudly accused as the cause of his ruin, perished with her son. The most faithful of his friends were sacrificed to the first fury of the soldiers. Others were reserved for the more deliberate cruelty of the usurper; and those who experienced the mildest treatment, were stripped of their employments, and ignominiously driven from the court and army.¹

The former tyrants, Caligula and Nero, Com-
modus and Caracalla, were all dissolute and un-
experienced youths, educated in the purple, and

Tyranny of
Maximin.

¹ Herodian, t. vi. p. 223-227.

² Caligula, the eldest of the four, was only twenty-five years of age when he ascended the throne; Caracalla was twenty-three, Commodus nineteen, and Nero no more than seventeen.

CHAP. VII. corrupted by the pride of empire, the luxury of Rome, and the perfidious voice of flattery. The cruelty of Maximin was derived from a different source, the fear of contempt. Though he depended on the attachment of the soldiers, who loved him for virtues like their own, he was conscious that his mean and barbarian origin, his savage appearance, and his total ignorance of the arts and institutions of civil life,¹ formed a very unfavourable contrast with the amiable manners of the unhappy Alexander. He remembered, that, in his humbler fortune, he had often waited before the door of the haughty nobles of Rome, and had been denied admittance by the insolence of their slaves. He recollects too the friendship of a few who had relieved his poverty, and assisted his rising hopes. But those who had spurned, and those who had protected the Thracian, were guilty of the same crime, the knowledge of his original obscurity. For this crime many were put to death; and by the execution of several of his benefactors, Maximin published, in characters of blood, the indelible history of his baseness and ingratitude.

The dark and sanguinary soul of the tyrant, was open to every suspicion against those among his subjects who were the most distinguished by their birth or merit. Whenever he was alarmed

¹ It appears that he was totally ignorant of the Greek language, which, from its universal use in conversation and letters, was an essential part of every Roman education.

¹ Hist. August. p. 241. Herodian, I. vii, p. 237. The latter of these historians has been most unjustly censured for sparing the vices of Maximin.

with the sound of treason, his cruelty was un- CHAS,
bounded and unrelenting. A conspiracy against VII.
his life was either discovered or imagined, and
Magnus, a consular senator, was named as the
principal author of it. Without a witness, with-
out a trial, and without an opportunity of de-
fence, Magnus, with four thousand of his sup-
posed accomplices, were put to death. Italy and
the whole empire were infested with insatiable
spies and informers. On the slightest accusation,
the first of the Roman nobles, who had governed
provinces, commanded armies, and been adorned
with the consular and triumphal ornaments, were
chained on the public carriages, and hurried
away to the emperor's presence. Confiscation,
exile, or simple death, were esteemed uncommon
instances of his lenity. Some of the unfortunate
sufferers he ordered to be sewed up in the hides
of slaughtered animals, others to be exposed to
wild beasts, others again to be beaten to death
with clubs. During the three years of his reign,
he disdained to visit either town or country. His
camp, occasionally removed from the banks of
the Rhine to those of the Danube, was the seat
of his stern despotism, which trampled on every
principle of law and justice, and was supported
by the avowed power of the sword.* No man

* The wife of Maximin, by threatening wife ~~and~~ son with female
gentleness, sometimes brought back the emperor to the paths of
right and humanity. See Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xiv, c. 1, where he
alludes to the fact, which he had more fully related under the reign
of the Gordians. We may collect from the medals, that Paulina
was the name of this benevolent empress; and from the title of
Diva, that she died before Maximin. (Valesius ad loc. cit., Am-
mian.) Spanheim de *Caes.* &c. P. N. tom. ii, p. 300.

CHAP. of noble birth, elegant accomplishments, or knowledge
VII. of civil business, was suffered near his person; and the court of a Roman emperor revived the idea of those ancient chiefs of slaves and gladiators, whose savage power had left a deep impression of terror and detestation.¹

Oppression
of the provinces.

As long as the cruelty of Maximin was confined to the illustrious senators, or even to the bold adventurers, who in the court or army expose themselves to the caprice of fortune, the body of the people viewed their sufferings with indifference, or perhaps with pleasure. But the tyrant's avarice, stimulated by the insatiate desires of the soldiers, at length attacked the public property. Every city of the empire was possessed of an independent revenue, destined to purchase corn for the multitude, and to supply the expenses of the games and entertainments. By a single act of authority, the whole mass of wealth was at once confiscated for the use of the imperial treasury. The temples were stripped of their most valuable offerings of gold and silver, and the statues of gods, heroes, and emperors, were melted down and coined into money. These impious orders could not be executed without tumults and massacres, as in many places the people chose rather to die in the defence of their altars than to behold in the midst of peace their cities exposed to the rapine and cruelty of war. The soldiers themselves, among whom this sacrilegious plunder was distributed, received it with

¹ He was compared to Spartacus and Athenio. Hist. August. p. 141.

blush; and, hardened as they were in acts of violence, they dreaded the just reproaches of their friends and relations. Throughout the Roman world a general cry of indignation was heard, imploring ~~the~~^{the} clemency of human kind, and at length, by an act of private oppression, a peaceful and unarmed province was driven into rebellion against him.¹

The procurator of Africa was a ~~scoundrel~~^{Revolt in} of such a master, who considered the fines and confiscations of the rich as one of the most fruitful branches of the imperial revenue.² An iniquitous sentence had been pronounced against some opulent youths of that country, the execution of which would have stripped them of ~~the~~^{the greater part of} their patrimony. In this extremity, a resolution that must either complete or prevent their ruin, was dictated by despair. A respite of three days, obtained with difficulty from the spacious treasurer, was employed in collecting a great number of slaves and peasants, who, armed with the weapons of clubs and axes,³ the leaders of the conspiracy, they were admitted to the audience of the procurator, stabbed him with the daggers concealed under their garments, and, by the assistance of their tumultuous train, seized the little town of Thysdrus, and created the stand-

Africa,
A. D. 237,
April.

¹ Herodian, Livid, p. 238. Zosim. l. i. p. 15.

² In the fertile territory of Byzacium, one hundred and fifty miles to the south of Carthage. This city was decorated, probably

CHAP. and of rebellion against the sovereign of the Roman empire. They rested their hopes on the hatred of mankind against Maximin, and they judiciously resolved to oppose to that detested tyrant, an emperor whose mild virtues had already acquired the love and esteem of the Romans, and whose authority over the province would give weight and stability to the enterprize. Gordianus, their proconsul, and the object of their choice, refused, with unfeigned reluctance, the dangerous honour, and begged, with tears, that they would suffer him to terminate in peace a long and innocent life, without staining his feeble age with civil blood. Their menaces compelled him to accept the imperial purple, his only refuge, indeed, against the jealous cruelty of Maximin, since, according to the reasoning of Suetonius, those who have been esteemed worthy of the throne deserved death, and those who deserved to live already rebelled.^{*}

Character
and eleva-
tion of the
two Gor-
dians.

The family of Gordianus was one of the most illustrious of the Roman senate. On the father's side, he was descended from the Gracchi; on his mother's, from the emperor Trajan. A great estate enabled him to support the dignity of his birth; and, in the enjoyment of it, he displayed an elegant taste, and benevolent disposition. The palace in Rome, formerly inhabited by the great Pompey, had been, during

by the Gordians, with the title, of *anthon*, and with a fine amphitheatre, which is still in a good state of repair. See Itinerar. Westring. p. 44, and Silius Italicus. l. 11. 5.

* Herodian, l. vii, p. 239. Hist. August. p. 153.

several generations, in the possession of Gordian's family.^p It was distinguished by ancient trophies of naval victories, and decorated with the works of modern painting. His villa on the road to Praeneste was celebrated for both its singular beauty and extent, for three stately rooms of an hundred feet in length, and for a magnificent portico, supported by two hundred columns of the four most curious and costly sorts of marble.^q The public shews exhibited at his expence, and in which the people were entertained with many hundreds of wild beasts and gladiators, seem to surpass the fortune of a subject; and whilst the liberality of other magistrates was confined to a few solemn festivals in Rome, the magnificence of Gordian was repeated, when he was aedile, every month in the year; and extended, during his consulship, to the principal

^p Hist. August. p. 152. The celebrated house of Pompey in cararia was usurped by Murena, and consequently became, after the triumphir's death, a part of the imperial domain. The emperor Trajan allowed, and even encouraged, such prodigious and needless places (Plin. Natural. Hist. l. 35. c. 10.) It may seem probable, that, on this occasion, Pompey's house came into the possession of Gordian's great-grandfather.

^q The Corian, the Numidian, the Carystian, and the Synnadian. The columns of Corian marble, have been faintly described, and imperfectly distinguished. It appears, however, that the Carystian was a sea-green, and that the marble of Synnada was white, mottled with oval spots of purple. See Selenus ad Hist. August. p. 164.

^r Hist. August. p. 151, 152. He sometimes gave five hundred pair of gladiators, never less than one hundred and fifty. He once gave, for the use of the circus, one hundred Sicilian, and as many Cappadocian horses. The animals designed for hunting were chiefly bears, boars, bulls, stags, elks, wild asses, &c. Elephants and lions seem to have been appropriated to imperial magnificence.

CHAP. ~~of Italy.~~ ^{VII.} He was twice elevated to the last-mentioned dignity, by Caracalla and by Alexander; for he possessed the uncommon talent of acquiring the esteem of virtuous princes, without alarming the jealousy of tyrants. His long life was innocently spent in the study of letters and the peaceful honours of Rome; and, till he was named proconsul of Africa by the voice of the senate and the approbation of Alexander,¹ he appears prudently to have declined the command of armies and the government of provinces. As long as that emperor lived, Africa was happy under the administration of his worthy representative; after the barbarous Maximin had usurped the throne, Gordianus alleviated the miseries which he was unable to prevent. When he reluctantly accepted the purple, he was above ~~seventy~~ years old; a last and valuable remains of the happy age of the Antonines, whose virtues he imitated in his own conduct, and celebrated in an elegant poem of thirty books. With the venerable proconsul, his son, who had accompanied him into Africa as his lieutenant, was likewise declared emperor. His manners were less pure, but his character was equally amiable with that of his father. Twenty-two acknowledged concubines, and a library of sixty-two thousand volumes, attested the variety of his inclinations; and from the productions which he left behind

¹ See the original letter, in the Augustan history, p. 192, where it appears that Alexander's nomination was the authority of the senate, and his election the provincial appointed by that assembly.

him, it appears that the former as well as the latter were designed for use rather than for ostentation.^t The Roman people acknowledged in the features of the younger Gordian the resemblance of Sejanus, recollecting with pleasure that his mother was the grand-daughter of Antoninus Pius, and rested the public hope on those latent virtues which had hitherto, as they fondly imagined, lain concealed in the luxurious indolence of a private life.

As soon as the Gordians had appealed the first tumult of a popular election, they removed their court to Carthage. They were received with the acclamations of the Africans, who honoured their virtues, and who, since the visit of Hadrian, had never beheld the majesty of a Roman emperor. But these vain acclamations neither strengthened nor confirmed the title of the Gordians. They were induced by principle, as well as interest, to solicit the approbation of the senate; and a deputation of the noblest provincials was sent, without delay, to Rome, to relate and justify the conduct of their countrymen, who, having long suffered with patience, were at length resolved to act with vigour. The letters of the new princes were modest and respectful, excusing the necessity which had obliged them to accept the imperial title; but submitting their election

^t By each of his concubines, the younger Gordian left three or four children. His literary productions, though less numerous, were by no means contemptible.

CHAP. and their fate to the supreme judgment of the
VII. senate.^{*}

The senators[†] The inclinations of the senate were neither ratifies the doubtful nor divided. The birth and noble alliances of the Gordians had intimately connected them with the most illustrious houses of Rome. Their fortune had created many dependents in that assembly, their merit had acquired many friends. Their mild administration opened the flattering prospect of the restoration, not only of the civil, but even of the republican government. The terror of military violence, which had first obliged the senate to forget the murder of Alexander, and to ratify the election of a barbarian praetor,[‡] now produced a contrary effect, and provoked them to assert the injured rights of freedom and humanity. The hatred of Maximinus, which the senate was declared and implacable; the young tribunes had not appeased his fury; the unanimous innocence would not remove his suspicion; and even the care of their own safety urged them to share the fortune of an enterprise, of which (if unsuccessful) they were sure to be the first victims. Those considerations, and perhaps others of a more private nature, were debated in a previous conference of the consuls and the magistrates. As soon as their resolution was decided, they convoked in the temple of Castor the whole body of the senate,

* Herodian, I. vii. p. 302. — See also p. 244.

† Quod enim perinde potest in omnibus ordinibus; in multis armis resoluta est certe. — Andrew Victor.

according to an ancient form of secrecy,¹ calculated to awaken their attention, and to conceal their decrees. "Conscript fathers," said the consul Syllanus, "the two Gordians, both of consular dignity, the one your proconsul, the other your lieutenant, have been declared enemies by the general consent of Africa. Let us return thanks," he boldly continued, "to the youth of Thysdrus; let us return thanks to the faithful people of Carthage, our generous deliverers from an horrid monster.—Why do you hate me thus poorly, thus timidly? Why do you cast these anxious looks on each other? why hesitate? Maximin is a public enemy! may his enmity soon expire with him, and may we long enjoy the prudence and felicity of Gordian the father, the valour and constancy of Gordian the son!"² The noble ardour of the consul revived the languid spirit of the senate. By an unanimous decree the election of the ~~Gordians~~^{and declares} ratified; Maximin, his son, and his adherents were pronounced enemies of their country, and liberal rewards were offered to whosoever had the courage and good fortune to destroy them.

During the emperor's absence, a detachment of the praetorian guards remained at Rome, to assume the command of Rome and Italy,

¹ Even the servants of the house, the scribes, &c. were excluded, and their office was filled by the ~~servants of the house~~. We are obliged to the Augustine History, p. 159, for preserving this curious example of the old discipline of the commonwealth.

² This spirited speech, translated from the Augustine historian, p. 155, seems transcribed by him from the original registers of the senate.

CHAP. ^{VII} protect, or rather to command the capital. The prefect Vitalianus had signalized his fidelity to Maximin, by the alacrity with which he had obeyed, and even prevented, the cruel mandates of the tyrant. His death alone could rescue the authority of the senate and the lives of the senators, from a state of danger and suspense. Before their resolves had transpired, a quaestor and some tribunes were commissioned to take his devoted life. They executed the order with equal boldness and success; and, with their bloody daggers in their hands, ran through the streets, proclaiming to the people and the soldiers, the news of the happy revolution. The enthusiasm of liberty was seconded by the promise of a large donative, in lands and money; the statues of Maximin were thrown down; the capital of the empire acknowledged, with transport, the authority of the two Gordians and the senate; and the example of Rome was followed by the rest of Italy.

and prepares for a civil war. A new spirit had arisen in that assembly, whose long patience had been insulted by wanton despotism and military licence. The senate assumed the reins of government, and, with a calm intrepidity, prepared to vindicate by arms the cause of freedom. Among the consular senators recommended by their merit and services to the favour of the emperor Alexander, it was easy to select twenty, not unequal to the command of an army, and the conduct of a war. To these

was the defence of Italy intrusted. Each was CHAP.
appointed to act in his respective department;
authorized to enrol and discipline the Italian
youth; and instructed to fortify the ports and
highways, against the impending invasion of
Maximin. A number of deputies, chosen from
the most illustrious of the senatorian and eques-
tri, were despatched at the same time to
the governors of the several provinces, earnestly
conjuring them to fly to the assistance of their
country, and to remind the nations of their an-
cient ties of friendship with the Roman senate
and people. The general respect with which
these deputies were received, and the zeal of
Italy and the provinces in favour of the senate,
sufficiently prove that the subjects of Maximin
were reduced to that uncommon distress, in
which the body of the people has more to fear
from oppression than from resistance. The con-
sciousness of that melancholy truth, inspires a
degree of persevering fury seldom to be found
in those civil wars which are carried on
for the benefit of a few factious and intriguing leaders.

For while the cause of the Gordians was em- Defeat and
blazed with such effusive ardour, the Gordians death of
themselves were no more. The feeble court of Gordians,
Carthage was alarmed with the rapid approach of A. D. 237,
Capitolinus, governor of Mauritania, who, with a
small band of veterans, and a fierce host of bar-

* Herodian, l. vii, p. 247. l. viii, p. 277. Hist. August. p. 156.
158.

CHAP. barians, attacked a faithful, but unwarlike province. The younger Gordian sallied out to meet the enemy at the head of a few guards, and a numerous undisciplined multitude, educated in the peaceful luxury of Carthage. His useless valour served only to procure him an honourable death in the field of battle. His aged father, whose reign had not exceeded thirty-six days, put an end to his life on the first news of the defeat. Carthage, destitute of defence, opened her gates to the conqueror, and Africa was exposed to the rapacious cruelty of a slave, obliged to satisfy his unrelenting master with a large account of blood and treasure.^c

Election of Maximus and Balbinus by the senate, 8th July. The fate of the Gordians filled Rome with just, but unexpected terror. The senate convoked in the temple of Concord; affected to transact the common business of the day; and seemed to decline, with trembling anxiety, the consideration of ~~the empire~~, and the public danger. A silent consternation prevailed on the assembly, till a senator, of the name and family of Trajan, awakened his brethren from their fatal lethargy. He represented to them, that the choice of cautious dilatory measures had been long since out of their power; that Maximin, implacable by nature,

^c Herodian, I. vii, p. 254. Hist. August. p. 150-160. We may observe, that one month and six days, for the reign of Gordian, is a just correction of Casaubon and Panvinius, instead of the absurd reading of one year and six months. See Commentar. p. 193. Zosimus relates, I. i, p. 17, that the two Gordians perished by a tempest in the midst of their navigation; a strange ignorance of history, or a strange abuse of metaphor!

and exasperated by injuries, was advancing towards Italy, at the head of the military force of the empire; and that their only remaining alternative, was either to meet him bravely in the field, or tamely to expect the tortures and ignominious death reserved for unsuccessful rebellion.

" We have lost," continued he; " two excellent princes; but unless we desert ourselves, the hopes of the republic have not perished with the Gordians. Many are the senators, whose virtues have deserved, and whose abilities would sustain, the imperial dignity. Let us elect two emperors, one of whom may conduct the war against the public enemy, whilst his colleague remains at Rome to direct the civil administration. I cheerfully expose myself to the danger and envy of the nomination, and give my vote in favour of Maximus and Balbinus. Ratify my choice, conscript fathers, or appoint, in their place, others more worthy of the empire." The general apprehension silenced the whispers of jealousy; the merit of the candidates was universally acknowledged; and the house resounded with the sincere acclamations, of " Long life and victory to the emperors Maximus and Balbinus. You are happy in the judgment of the senate; may the republic be happy under your administration!"⁴

⁴ See the Augustan history, p. 166, from the registers of the senate; the date is confessedly faulty, but the coincidence of the Apollinarian games enables us to correct it.

CHAP. VII. The virtues and the reputation of the new emperors justified the most sanguine hopes of the Romans. The various nature of their talents seemed to appropriate to each his peculiar department of peace and war, without leaving room for jealous emulation. Balbinus was an admired orator, a poet of distinguished fame, and a wise magistrate, who had exercised with innocence and applause the civil jurisdiction in almost all the interior provinces of the empire. His birth was noble,* his fortune affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him the love of pleasure was corrected by a sense of dignity, nor had the habits of ease deprived him of a capacity for business. The mind of Maximus was formed in a rougher mould. By his valour and abilities he had raised himself from the meanest origin to the first employments of the state and army. His victories over the Sarmatians and the Germans, the austerity of his life, and the rigid impartiality of his justice, whilst he was prefect of the city, commanded the esteem of a people, whose affections were engaged in favour of the more amiable Balbinus. The two colleagues had both been

* He was descended from Cornelius Balbus, a noble Spaniard, and the adopted son of Theophanes, the Greek historian. Balbus obtained the freedom of Rome by the favour of Pompey, and preserved it by the eloquence of Cicero (see Orat. pro Cornel. Balbo). The friendship of Caesar (to whom he rendered the most important secret services in the civil war) raised him to the consulship and the pontificate, honours never yet possessed by a stranger. The nephew of this Balbus triumphed over the Cimbri and Teutones. See Biographie Bayle, an mot Balbus, where he distinguishes the several persons of that name, and rectifies, with his usual accuracy, the mistakes of former writers concerning them.

consuls (Balbinus had twice enjoyed that honourable office), both had been named among the twenty lieutenants of the senate; and since the one was sixty, and the other seventy-four years old,<sup>CHAP.
VIL</sup> they had both attained the full maturity of age and experience.

After the senate had conferred on Maximus and Balbinus an equal portion of the consular and tribunitian power, the title of fathers of their country, and the joint office of supreme pontiff, they ascended to the capitol, to return thanks to the gods, protectors of Rome.^{Tumult at Rome. The young emperor Gordian is declared Caesar.} The solemn rites of sacrifice were disturbed by a sedition of the people. The licentious multitude neither loved the rigid Maximus, nor did they sufficiently fear the mild and humane Balbinus. Their increasing numbers surrounded the temple of Jupiter; with obstinate clamours they asserted their inherent right of consenting to the election of their sovereign; and demanded, with an apparent moderation, that, besides the two emperors chosen by the senate, a third should be added of the family of the Gordians, as a just return of gratitude to those princes who had sacrificed their lives for the republic. At the head of the city-guards, and the youth of the equestrian

^a Zosimas, l. xii, p. 632. But little dependence is to be had on the authority of a modern Greek, so grossly ignorant of the history of the third century, that he creates several imaginary emperors, and confounds those who really existed.

^b Herodian, l. vii, p. 256, supposes that the senate was at first convened in the capitol, and is very eloquent on the occasion. The Augustan history, p. 116, seems much more authentic.

CHAP. VII. order, Maximus and Balbinus attempted to cut their way through the seditious multitude. The multitude, armed with sticks and stones, drove them back into the capitol. It is prudent to yield when the contest, whatever may be the issue of it, must be fatal to both parties. A boy, only thirteen years of age, the grandson of the elder, and nephew of the younger, Gordian, was produced to the people, invested with the ornaments and title of Cæsar. The tumult was appeased by this easy condescension; and the two emperors, as soon as they had been peaceably acknowledged in Rome, prepared to defend Italy against the common enemy.

Maximin
prepares to
attack the
senate and
their em-
perors.

Whilst in Rome and Africa revolutions succeeded each other with such amazing rapidity, the mind of Maximin was agitated by the most furious passions. He is said to have received the news of the rebellion of the Gordians, and of the decree of the senate against him, not with the temper of a man, but the rage of a wild beast; which, as it could not discharge itself on the distant senate, threatened the life of his son, of his friends, and of all who ventured to approach his person. The grateful intelligence of the death of the Gordians was quickly followed by the assurance that the senate, laying aside all hopes of pardon or accommodation, had substituted in their room two emperors, with whose merit he could not be unacquainted. Revenge was the only consolation left to Maximin, and revenge could only be obtained by arms. The strength of the legions had been assembled by Alexander

from all parts of the empire. Three successful CHAP.
campaigns against the Germans, and the Sarma- VII.
tians, had raised their fame, confirmed their discipline, and even increased their numbers, by filling the ranks with the flower of the barbarian youth. The life of Maximin had been spent in war, and the candid severity of history cannot refuse him the valour of a soldier, or even the abilities of an experienced general.¹ It might naturally be expected, that a prince of such a character, instead of suffering the rebellion to gain stability by delay, should immediately have marched from the banks of the Danube to those of the Tyber, and that his victorious army, instigated by contempt for the senate, and eager to gather the spoils of Italy, should have burned with impatience to finish the easy and lucrative conquest. Yet as far as we can trust to the obscure chronology of that period,² it appears that

¹ In Herodian, l. viii, p. 248, and in the Augustan history, we have three several orations of Maximin to his army, on the rebellion of Africa and Rome. M. de Tillemont has very justly observed, that they neither agree with each other, nor with truth. *Histoire des Empereurs*, tom. iii, p. 799.

² The carelessness of the writers of that age leaves us in a singular perplexity. 1. We know that Maximus and Balbinus were killed during the Capitoline games. Herodian, l. viii, p. 285. The authority of Censorinus (*de Die Natali*, c. 18) enables us to fix those games, with certainty, to the year 238, but leaves us in ignorance of the month or day. 2. The election of Gordian by the senate is fixed, with equal certainty, to the 27th of May; but we are at a loss to discover, whether it was in the same or the preceding year. Tillemont and Muratori, who maintain the two opposite opinions, bring into the field a desultory troop of authorities, conjectures, and probabilities. The one seems to draw out, the other to contract, the series of events between those periods, more than can be well reconciled to reason and history. Yet it is necessary to choose between them.

CHAP. the operations of some foreign war deferred the
 VII. Italian expedition till the ensuing spring. From
 the prudent conduct of Maximin, we may learn
 that the savage features of his character have been
 exaggerated by the pencil of party, that his pas-
 sions, however impetuous, submitted to the force
 of reason, and that the barbarian possessed some-
 thing of the generous spirit of Sylla, who sub-
 dued the enemies of Rome, before he suffered
 himself to revenge his private injuries.^k

Marches
into Italy,
A. D. 238,
February.

When the troops of Maximin, advancing in
 excellent order, arrived at the foot of the Julian
 Alps, they were terrified by the silence and deso-
 lation that reigned on the frontiers of Italy. The
 villages and open towns had been abandoned on
 their approach by the inhabitants, the cattle was
 driven away, the provisions removed, or destroy-
 ed, the bridges broke down, nor was any thing
 left which could afford either shelter or sub-
 sistence to an invader. Such had been the wise
 orders of the generals of the senate; whose de-
 sign was to protract the war, to ruin the army of
 Maximin by the slow operation of famine, and to
 consume his strength in the sieges of the prin-
 cipal cities of Italy, which they had plentifully
 stored with men and provisions from the deserted
 country. Aquileia received and withstood the
 first shock of the invasion. The streams that
 issue from the head of the Adriatic gulf, swelled

Siege of
Aquileia.

^k Velleius Paterculus, I. vi. p. 156. The president de Montes-
 galion (in his dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates) expresses the
 sentiments of the Stoicks in a pointed, and even a sublime man-
 ner.

by the melting of the winter snows,¹ opposed CHAR.
an unexpected obstacle to the arms of Maximin. VII.
At length, on a singular bridge, constructed, with
art and difficulty, of large hogsheads, he trans-
ported his army to the opposite bank, rooted up
the beautiful vineyards in the neighbourhood of
Aquileia, demolished the suburbs, and employed
the timber of the buildings in the engines and
towers, with which, on every side, he attacked the
city. The walls, fallen to decay during the
security of a long peace, had been hastily repaired
on this sudden emergency; but the firmest de-
fence of Aquileia consisted in the constancy of
the citizens; all ranks of whom, instead of being
dismayed, were animated, by the extreme dan-
ger, and their knowledge of the tyrant's unrelent-
ing temper. Their courage was supported and
directed by Crispinus and Menophilus, two of the
twenty lieutenants of the senate, who, with a small
body of regular troops, had thrown themselves
into the besieged place. The army of Maximin
was repulsed on repeated attacks; his machines

¹ Muratori (*Annali d'Italia*, tom. ii, p. 294) thinks the melting of the snow falls better with the months of June or July, than with that of February. The opinion of a man who passed his life between the Alps and the Apennines, is undoubtedly of great weight; yet I observe, 1. That the long winter, of which Muratori takes advantage, is to be found only in the Latin version, and not in the Greek text of Herodian. 2. That the multitude of suns and rains, to which the soldiers of Maximin were exposed (Herodian, l. viii, p. 270), denotes the spring rather than the summer. We may observe likewise, that these several streams, as they melted into one, composed the Timavos, so poetically (in every sense of the word) described by Virgil. They are about twelve miles to the east of Aquileia. See Cluver, *Italia*, tom. i, p. 189, &c.

CHAP. ^{VII.} destroyed by showers of artificial fire, and the generous enthusiasm of the Aquileians was exalted into a confidence of success, by the opinion, that Belenus, their tutelar deity, combated in person in the defence of his distressed worshippers.^m

^{Conduct of Maximus.} The emperor Maximus, who had advanced as far as Ravenna, to secure that important place, and to hasten the military preparations, beheld the event of the war in the more faithful mirror of reason and policy. He was too sensible, that a single town could not resist the persevering efforts of a great army; and he dreaded, lest the enemy, tired with the obstinate resistance of Aquileia, should on a sudden relinquish the fruitless siege, and march directly towards Rome. The fate of the empire, and the cause of freedom, must then be committed to the chance of a battle; and what arms could he oppose to the veteran legions of the Rhine and Danube? Some troops newly levied among the generous, but enervated, youth of Italy, and a body of German auxiliaries, on whose firmness, in the hour of trial, it was dangerous to depend. In the midst of these just alarms, the stroke of domestic conspiracy punished the crimes of Maximus; and delivered Rome and the senate from the calamities that would surely have attended the victory of an enraged barbarian.

^m Herodian, l. viii, p. 272. The Celtic deity was supposed to be Apollo, and received, under that name, the thanks of the senate. A temple was likewise built at Taurum the Bald, in honour of the women of Aquileia, who had given up their hair to make ropes for the military engines.

The people of Aquileia had scarcely experienced any of the common miseries of a siege; their magazines were plentifully supplied, and several fountains within the walls assured them of an inexhaustible resource of fresh water. The soldiers of Maximin were, on the contrary, exposed to the inclemency of the season, the contagion of disease, and the horrors of famine. The open country was ruined, the rivers filled with the slain, and polluted with blood. A spirit of despair and disaffection began to diffuse itself among the troops; and as they were cut off from all intelligence, they easily believed that the whole empire had embraced the cause of the senate, and that they were left as devoted victims to perish under the impregnable walls of Aquileia. The fierce temper of the tyrant was exasperated by disappointments, which he imputed to the cowardice of his army; and his wanton and ill-timed cruelty, instead of striking terror, inspired hatred, and a just desire of revenge. A party of praetorian guards, who trembled for their wives and children in the camp of Alba, near Rome, executed the sentence of the senate. Maximin, abandoned by his guards, was slain in his tent, with his son (whom he had associated to the honours of the purple), Anulinus the prefect, and the principal ministers of his tyranny.^a The sight of their heads, borne

^a Herodian, I. viii, p. 279. Hist. August. p. 146. The duration of Maximin's reign has not been defined with much accuracy, except by Eutropius, who allows him three years and a few days (l. ix).

CHAP. on the point of spears, convinced the citizens of
 VII. Aquileia, that the siege was at an end; the gates
 of the city were thrown open, a liberal market
 was provided for the hungry troops of Maximin,
 and the whole army joined in solemn protesta-
 tions of fidelity to the senate and the people of
 Rome, and to their lawful emperors Maximus
 His por- and Balbinus. Such was the deserved fate of
 trait. a brutal savage, destitute, as he has generally
 been represented, of every sentiment that dis-
 tinguishes a civilized, or even a human being.
 The body was suited to the soul. The stature
 of Maximin exceeded the measure of eight
 feet, and circumstances almost incredible are
 related of his matchless strength and appetite.
 Had he lived in a less enlightened age, tradition
 and poetry might well have described him as
 one of those monstrous giants, whose superna-
 tural power was constantly exerted for the de-
 destruction of mankind.

Joy of the Roman world. It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant, the news of which is said to have been carried in four days from Aquileia to Rome. The return of Maximus was a triumphal proce-

Q. ix. l; we may depend on the integrity of the text, as the Latin original is checked by the Greek version of Panini.

* Eight Roman feet and one third, which are equal to about eight English feet, as the two measures are to each other in the proportion to 967 to 1000. See Graves's discourse on the Roman foot. We are told that Maximin could drink in a day an amphora (or about seven gallons of wine), and eat forty pounds of meat. He could move a loaded wagon, break a horse's leg with his hand, and pull up small trees by the roots. See his life in the Augustan History.

sion; his colleague and young Gordian went out to meet him, and the three princes made their entry into the capital, attended by the ambassadors of almost all the cities of Italy, saluted with the splendid offerings of gratitude and superstition, and received with the unfeigned acclamations of the senate and people, who persuaded themselves that a golden age would succeed to an age of iron.⁹ The conduct of the two emperors corresponded with these expectations. They administered justice in person; and the rigour of the one was tempered by the other's clemency. The oppressive taxes with which Maximin had loaded the rights of inheritance and succession, were repealed, or at least moderated. Discipline was revived, and with the advice of the senate many wise laws were enacted by their imperial ministers, who endeavoured to restore a civil constitution on the ruins of military tyranny.¹⁰ "What reward may we expect for delivering Rome from a monster?" was the question asked by ~~Maximinus~~¹¹ a moment of freedom and confidence. Balbinus answered it without hesitation, "The love of the senate, of the people, and of all mankind." "Alas!" replied his more penetrating colleague, "Alas! I dread the hatred of the soldiers, and the fatal effects of their resentment."¹² His apprehensions were but too well justified by the events

⁹ See the congratulatory letter of Claudio Julianus the consul, to the two emperors, in the Augustan History.

¹⁰ Hist. August. p. 171.

CHAP. VII. Whilst Maximus was preparing to defend Italy against the common foe, Balbinus, who remained at Rome, had been engaged in scenes of blood and intestine discord. Distrust and jealousy reigned in the senate; and even in the temples where they assembled, every senator carried either open or concealed arms. In the midst of their deliberations, two veterans of the guards, actuated either by curiosity or a sinister motive, audaciously thrust themselves into the house, and advanced by degrees beyond the altar of Victory. Gallicanus, a consular, and Mæcenas, a prætorian senator, viewed with indignation their insolent intrusion: drawing their daggers, they laid the spies, for such they deemed them, dead at the foot of the altar, and then advancing to the door of the senate, imprudently exhorted the multitude to massacre the prætorians, as the secret adherents of the tyrant. Those who escaped the first fury of the tumult took refuge in the camp, which they defended with superior advantage against the reiterated attacks of the people, assisted by the numerous bands of gladiators, the property of opulent noblés. The civil war lasted many days, with infinite loss and confusion on both sides. When the pipes were broken that supplied the camp with water, the prætorians were reduced to intolerable distress; but in their turn they made desperate sallies into the city, set fire to a great number of houses, and filled the streets with the blood of the inhabitants. The emperor Balbinus attempted, by ineffectual edicts and precarious truces, to recon-

cile the factions at Rome. But their animosity, though smothered for a while, burnt with redoubled violence. The soldiers, detesting the senate and the people, despised the weakness of a prince, who wanted either the spirit or the power to command the obedience of his subjects.¹

After the tyrant's death, his formidable army had acknowledged, from necessity rather than choice, the authority of Maximus, who transported himself without delay to the camp before Aquileia. As soon as he had received their oath of fidelity, he addressed them in terms full of mildness and moderation; lamented, rather than arraigned, the wild disorders of the times, and assured the soldiers, that of all their past conduct, the senate would remember only their generous desertion of the tyrant, and their voluntary return to their duty. Maximus enforced his exhortations by a liberal donative, purified the camp by a solemn sacrifice of expiation, and then dismissed the legions to their several provinces, impressed, as he hoped, with a lively sense of gratitude and obedience. But nothing could reconcile the haughty spirit of the prætorians. They attended the emperors on the memorable day of their public entry into Rome; but amidst the general acclamations, the sullen dejected countenance of the guards sufficiently declared that they considered themselves as the object, rather than the partners, of the triumph. When the whole body was united in their camp, those who had served under Maximin, and those

¹ Herodian, l. viii, p. 258.

² Herodian, l. viii, p. 213.

CHAP. VII. who had remained at Rome, insensibly communicated to each other their complaints and apprehensions. The emperors chosen by the army had perished with ignominy; those elected by the senate were seated on the throne.¹ The long discord between the civil and military powers was decided by a war, in which the former had obtained a complete victory. The soldiers must now learn a new doctrine of submission to the senate; and whatever alacrity was affected by that politic assembly, they dreaded a slow revenge, coloured by the name of discipline, and justified by fair pretences of the public good. But their fate was still in their own hands; and if they had courage to despise the vain terrors of an impotent republic, it was easy to convince the world, that those who were masters of the arms, were masters of the authority of the state.

Massacre of Maximus and Balbinus. While the senate elected two princes, it is probable that, besides the declared reason of providing for the various emergencies of peace and war, they were actuated by the secret desire of weakening by division the despotism of the supreme magistrate. Their policy was effectual, but it proved fatal both to their emperors and to themselves. The jealousy of power was soon exasperated by the difference of character. Maximus despised Balbinus as a luxurious noble, and was in his turn disdained by his colleague as an

¹ The observation had been made independently enough in the exclamations of the senate, and with regard to the soldiers it carried the appearance of a wanton insult. Hist. August. p. 170.

obscure soldier. Their silent discord was understood rather than seen;¹ but the mutual consciousness prevented them from uniting in any vigorous measures of defence against their common enemies of the praetorian camp. The whole city was employed in the capitoline games, and the emperors were left almost alone in the palace. On a sudden they were alarmed by the approach of a troop of despatched assassins. Ignorant of each other's situation or designs, for they already occupied very distant apartments, and could give or receive no assistance, they waited the important moments in idle debates and fruitless recriminations. The arrival of the guards put an end to the vain strife. They seized on these emperors of the senate, for such they called them with malicious contempt, stripped them of their garments, and dragged them in insolent triumph through the streets of Rome, with a design of inflicting a slow and painful death upon these unfortunate princes. The fear of torture from the faithful Germans of the imperial guards, shortened their tortures; and their bodies, mangled with a thousand wounds, were left exposed to the insults or to the pity of the populace.²

¹ *Discordia tacita, et quae intelliguntur potius quam videntur;* Hist. Augut. p. 170. This well-known expression is derived from some better writer.

² *Maurand,* b. viii. p. 287, 290.

CHAP. - In the space of a few months, six princes had
 VII been cut off by the sword. Gordian, who had
 already received the title of Cæsar, was the only
 person that occurred to the soldiers as proper to
 fill the vacant throne.¹ They carried him to
 the camp, and unanimously saluted him Augustus,
 and emperor. His name was dear to the senate
 and people; his tender age promised a long im-
 purity of military licence; and the submission of
 Rome and the provinces to the choice of the
 praetorian guards saved the republic, at the ex-
 pense indeed of its freedom and dignity, from
 the horrors of a new civil war in the heart of
 the capital.²

Innocence and virtues of Gordian. As the third Gordian was only nineteen years
 of age at the time of his death, the history of his
 reign was not known to us with greater accuracy
 than it really is, would contain little more than
 the details of debauchery, and the conduct of
 a young and weak sovereign, who was guided by
 the simplicity of his unexperienced youth. Immediately after his accession, he fell into the hands of

¹ Quis non aliis erat impensis, in the expression of the Augustan history.

² Quintus Curtius (B. 2. c. 9) pays an elegant compliment to the
 empire of the Augustan history. He has happy allusions to his
 many triumphs, sheathed so many swords, and put an end
 to the evils of a divided government. After weighing with atten-
 tion every word of the passage, I am of opinion that it suits better
 with the elevation of Gordian, than with any other period of the
 Roman history. In that case, it may serve to decide the age of
 Quintus Curtius. Those who place him before the first Gordian argue
 from the purity of his style. But we are informed by the "Mémoires de
 Ciceron," in his 2nd volume, that ancient historians.

his mother's eunuchs, that venomous vermin of CHAP.
the East, who, since the days of Flagabulus, had
infested the Roman palace. By the artful con-
spiracy of these wretched impudent men, it was
drawn between the innocent prince and his op-
pressed subjects, the virtuous disposition of Gordi-
an was disbelieved, and the honours of the empire
sold. But the young emperor, though in a very
public manner, to the most worthless of
kind. We are ignorant by what fortunate ac-
cident the emperor escaped from this ignominious
slavery, ^{l. 240.} ^{Admini-} ^{stration of} ^{Misitheus.} ^{Minitheus.}
Misitheus, who was wise enough to see the object except
the glory of his sovereign, and the happiness of
the people. It should seem that love and learning
introduced Misitheus to the favour of Gordian.
The young prince married the daughter
of his master of rhetoric, and promoted his fa-
ther-in-law to the first offices of the empire.
Two admirable letters, interposed between them,
are still extant, ^{in which} ^{with} the consciousness
dignity of virtue, ^{congratulates} ^{him} ^{on} ^{his}
is delivered from the tyranny of the eunuchs,
and ^{still} ^{shows} that he is sensible of his deliver-
ance. The emperor acknowledges, with an am-
iable confusion, the errors of his past conduct;
and laments, with singular propriety, the misfor-
tune of a monarch, from whom a venal tribe of

* Hist. August. p. 161. From some hints in the two letters, I
should expect that the eunuchs were not expelled the palace, without
some degree of gentle violence, and that the young Gordian rather
approved of, than consented to, their disgrace.

CHAP. courtiers, perpetually labour to conceal the
VII, truth.^a

The Per-
sian war,
A. D. 242.

The life of Misitheus had been spent in the profession of letters, not of arms; yet such was the versatile genius of that great man, that, when he was appointed praetorian prefect, he discharged the military duties of his place with spirit and ability. The Persians had invaded Mesopotamia, and threatened Antioch. By the persuasion of his father-in-law, the young emperor quitted the luxury of Rome, opened, for the last time recorded in history, the temple of Janus, and marched in person into the East. On his approach with a great army, the Persians withdrew their garrisons from the cities which they had already taken, and retired from the Euphrates to the Tigris. Gordian enjoyed the pleasure of announcing to the senate the conquest of his army, which he furnished with a becoming

gratitude to the wisdom of his son
ther and prefect. During the whole expedition, Misitheus watched over the safety and discipline of the army; whilst he prevented their dangerous murmurs by maintaining a regular plenty in the camp, and by establishing ample magazines of vinegar, bacon, straw, barley, and wheat, in all the cities of the frontier.^b But the prosperity

^a Duxit uxorem filiam Misithel, quem cum eloquentie digna parentela sua putavit; et praefectum status fecit; post quod, non posse jam et contemptibile videbatur impetrare.

^b Hist. August. p. 162. Aurelius Victor. Perpetua in VI. Epistola ap. Fabricium. Historia Augusta. I. IV. c. 36. The philosopher Plotinus accompanied the army, prompted by the love of knowledge, and by the hope of penetrating as far as India.

We cannot forbear transcribing the following, Form of a
thought somewhat fanciful description, which a military
republic.

⁶ About twenty miles from the little town of Circesium, on the frontier of the two empires.

⁴ The inscription (which contained only singular names) was erased by the order of Licinius, who superseded Constantius in his relationship to Philip (Hist. August. p. 165); but the limestone, or material of which, which formed the sepulchre, still subsisted in the time of Julian. See *Athenaeum*, vol. xliii. 5.

² Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiii, 31. Zosimus, i. 1, p. 19. Philip, who was a native of Bostra, was about forty years of age.

CHAP. celebrated writer of our own times has traced of
VII. the military government of the Roman empire.

What in that age was called the Roman empire, was only an irregular republic, not unlike the aristocracy¹ of Algiers,² where the militia,³ possessed of the sovereignty, creates and deposes a magistrate, who is styled a dey. Perhaps, indeed, it may be laid down as a general rule, that a military government is, in some respects, more arbitrary than monarchical. Nor can it be said that the soldiers only partook of the government by their disobedience and rebellions. The speeches made to them by the emperors, were they not at length of the same nature as those formerly pronounced to the people by the consuls and the tribunes? And although the armies had no regular place or period of assembly, though their debates were short, uncertain, sudden and their resolves soon the result of cool reflection, did they not impose, with absolute sway, of the publick fortune? What was the emperor, except the minister of a violent government, elected for the private benefit of the soldiers.

When the army had elected Philip, who was praetorian prefect to the third Gordian,

¹ Can the epithet of aristocracy be applied, with any propriety, to the government of Algiers? Every military government stands between the extremes of absolute monarchy and wild democracy.

² The military republic of the *goumara* in Egypt would have afforded M. de Montesquieu (*Considérations sur la Grèce et la Décadence des Romains*, c. 16), a juster and more noble parallel.

" the latter demanded, that he might remain CHAP.
 " sole emperor who was unable to obtain it. He
 " requested, that the power might be equally
 " divided; but his request, the army should not
 " listen to him. He then endeavoured to humble
 " gradually the rank of Caesar, by the favour and
 " refinement. He desired, at least, he might
 " be appointed prefect; his prayer
 " was rejected. Finally, he pleased for his life.
 " The army, in these several judgments, ex-
 " cised the supreme magistracy." According to
 the history of Tacitus, had been adopted. Philip, who,
 during the whole transaction, had preserved a
 sullen silence, was inclined to spare the innocent
 life of his benefactor; till, recollecting that his
 innocence might excite a dangerous compassion
 in the Roman world, he commanded, without
 regard to his suppliant cries, that he should be
 hurried away to instant death.
 After the inhuman sentence
 was executed, ~~he~~
~~his return from Gaul,~~ Reign of
Philip.

desire of obliterating the memory of his crimes,
 and of extinguishing the affections of the people,

The Augustan History, 163, 164, cannot, in this instance,
 be reconciled with itself or with probability. He could Philip
 condemn his predecessor, and, however, he
 could be order his public execution, he could not, through
 any means, exonerate himself from the same charge, which, though
 a trifling usurper, was by no means a small one. Some chro-
 nical difficulties have likewise been discovered by the nice eyes
 of Tischendorf and Grotius, in this supposed association of Philip to
 the empire.

CHAP.
VII.Secular
games,
A. D. 248,
April 21.

solemnized the secular games with infinite pomp and magnificence. Since their institution or re-institution by Augustus,¹ they had been celebrated by Claudius, by Demitrian, and by Severus, and were now renewed the fifth time, on the accomplishment of the full period of a thousand years from the foundation of Rome. Every circumstance of the secular games was skilfully adapted to inspire the superstitious mind with deep and solemn reverence. The long interval between them exceeded the term of human life; and none of the spectators had already seen them; none could flatter themselves with the expectation of beholding them a second time. The mystic sacrifices were performed, during three nights, on the banks of the Tyber; and the Campus Martius resounded with music and dances, and was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches. Skilled musicians were excluded from the participation in these national ceremonies. A chorus of twenty-seven youths, and as many virgins, of noble families, whose parents were both alive, implored the propitious gods in favour of the present, and for the hope

¹ The account of the last supposed celebration, though it may lightened period of history, was so very doubtful and obscure, that the historians differed respecting it. When the papal year, the copy of the secular games, were invented by Boniface VIII, the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient institution. See M. le Châtel Lettres sur les Jubiles.

² Either of a hundred, or a hundred and ten years. Varron and Levy adopted the former opinion, but without the authority of the best conserated time, mentioned in the Novel, c. 17. The emperor Claudius and others, however, did not think the epoch with implicit respect.

of the rising generation; requesting, in religious ~~char-~~
hymns, that, according to the faith of their
ancient oracles, they would still maintain the
virtue, the felicity, and the empire of the Roman
people.¹ The magnificence of Philip's shows
and entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude.
The devout were employed in the rites
of supplication, whilst the profaning few revolved
in their anxious minds the past history and the
future fate of the empire.

Since Romulus, with a small band of shepherds
and exiles, had fixed himself on the hills near
the Tiber, the virtues had already disappeared.
During the four first ages, the Romans, in the
laborious school of poverty, had acquired the
virtues of war and government: by the vigorous
exertion of those virtues, and by the assistance of
fortune, they had obtained, in the course of the
three succeeding centuries, an absolute empire
over almost the entire of Europe, Asia, and Africa.
The last three centuries had been consumed
in apparent prosperity and declining virtue.
The nobles, soldiers, magistrates, and vigilantes,
who composed the thirty-five tribes of the ancient
people, had dissolved into the common mass of
mankind, and confounded with the millions of
servile provincials, who had received the name,

Decline of
the Roman
empire.

¹ The idea of the secular games is best derived from the poem of Horace, and the description of Varro, &c. See p. 167, &c.

The received calculation of Varro assigns to the foundation of Rome an era that corresponds with the 754th year before Christ. But so little is the chronology of Rome to be depended on, in the more early ages, that Sir Isaac Newton has brought the same event down as the year 627.

CHAP. without adopting the spirit of Romans.^{VII.} A mercenary army, levied among the subjects and barbarians of the frontier, was the only order of men who preserved and abused their independence. By their tumultuary election, a Syrian, a Goth, or an Arab, was exalted to the throne of Rome, and invested with despotic power over the conquests and over the country of the Scipios.

The limits of the Roman empire still extended from the Western ocean to the Tigris, and from Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. To the undiscerning eye of the vulgar, Philip appeared a monarch no less powerful than Hadrian or Augustus had formerly been. The form was still the same, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of calamities. The discipline of the legions, which, since after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was corrupted by the parsimony, or relaxed by the weakness, of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which had always consisted in a numerous garrison in fortifications, was insensibly undermined, and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians, who soon discovered the decline of the Roman empire.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHAPTER 41

*Of the 1500 cases after the restoration of the
country by Attalides.*

W^{II}hen we consider the progress of those
domestic transactions of the Germans or of the
Parthians; his principal object is to relieve the
attention from the scene of
victorius invasions. But in the course of his history
in the time of Alexander Severus, the enemies of
Rome were in her bosom; the tyrants, and the
soldiers, and her prosperity had a very distant
and feeble interest in the revolutions that might
happen beyond the Rhine and the Euphrates.
But when the military order had levelled, in wild
anarchy, the power of the prince, the laws of
the senate, and the discipline of the camp,
the barbarians of Europe and Asia, who had long
hovered over the frontier, began to attack the provinces of a divided monarchy.
Their predatory inroads were changed into
formidable invasions; and, after a long vicissitude of mutual calamities, many tribes of the
victorious invaders established themselves in the
provinces of the Roman empire. In order to gain
clearer knowledge of these great events, we shall
endeavour to form a previous idea of the character,
force, and designs of those nations who
avenged the cause of Hannibal and Mithridates.

CHAP.
VIII.

The batharians of the east and of the north.

CHAP.
VIII.
Revolu-
tions of
Asia.

In the more early ages of the world, whilst the forest that covered Europe afforded a retreat for wandering savages, the inhabitants of Asia were already collected into populous cities, and reduced under extensive empires, the seat of the arts, of luxury, and of despotism. The Assyrians reigned over the East, till the sceptre of Ninus and Semiramis dropt from the hands of their enervated successors. The Medes and the Babylonians divided their power, whenever themselves encumbered up by the anarchy of the Parthians, whose arms could not be confined within the narrow limits of Asia. Followed, as it is said,^{*} by two millions of men, Xerxes, the descendant of Cyrus, invaded Greece. Thirty thousand soldiers, under the command of Alexander, the son of Philip, who was intrusted by the Greeks with their glory and revenge, were sufficient to subdue Persia. The prince of the house of Macedon, compelled, about the same time that, by a very nominous treaty, they resigned to the Romans the country on this side Mount Taurus, they were driven by the Parthians, an obscure horde of Scythian origin, from all the provinces of Upper Asia. The formidable power of the Par-

* An ancient chronologist quoted by Velleius Paterculus, observes, that the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, reigned over Asia one thousand nine hundred and thirty-five years, from the accession of Ninus to the conquest of Asia by the Romans. As the latter of these events happened 2184 years before Christ, the former may be placed 2184 years before the same era. The astronomer *Macrobii*, found at Babylon by Alexander, went fifty years higher.

thians, which spread from India to the frontiers of Syria, was in its turn subverted by Ardashir, or Artaxerxes, the founder of a new dynasty, which, under the name of Sasanian, continued to rule Persia till the invasion of the country by the Moors. The empire, whose fate was similar to that experienced by the Roman, began in the fourth year of Alexander Sosman,¹ two hundred and twenty-six years after the Christian era.²

Artaxerxes had served with great reputation in the armies of Artaban, the last king of the Parthians, and it is probable that he was driven into exile and rebellion by royal intrigues. His success was obscure, and the obscurity equally gave room to the aspersions of his enemies, and the flattery of his adherents. If we credit the scandal of the former, Artaxerxes sprang from the illegitimate commerce of a tanner's wife with a common soldier. The latter represent him as descended from a long series of ancient kings of Persia; though time and misfortune had gradually reduced his ancestors to the humble condition of

The Per-
sonal mo-
narchy re-
stored by
Artax-

¹ In the second and thirty-eighth year of the era of Seleucus. See Agathias, I. II., p. 63. This great event (such is the carelessness of the Orientals) is placed by Eutychius as high as the tenth year of Commodus; and by Nestor of Chorene, as low as the reign of Philip. Ammianus Marcellinus has so scrupulously copied Eutychius, that he has even given the family of the Arsacides as the origin of the Sasanians.

² This emperor's name was Babee, the soldier's Sasse; from the former he was supposed to have obtained the surname of Babegan, from the latter all his descendants have been styled Sasanides.



CHAPTER VIII.
As the lineal heirs of the monarch,
the Parthians asserted his right to the throne, and thus
brought the noble task of delivering the Persians
from the oppression under which they groaned
above five centuries since the death of Durus.
The Parthians were defeated in three great bat-
tles. In the last of these their king Artaban was
slain, and the spirit of the nation was for ever
broken.¹ The authority of Artaxerxes was not
less firmly acknowledged by his son Ardashir,
Belis, and his younger brother Varanes. Branches of
the royal house of Arsaces were confounded
among the prostrate satraps. A third, more
mindful of ancient grandeur than of present ne-
cessity, attempted to retire, with a numerous train
of vassals, towards their kinsman the king of
Armenia; but this little army of deserters was
intercepted and cut off, by the vigilance of their
conqueror, who finally assumed the title of
deus maximus, or king of kings, which had
been enjoyed by his predecessor. But these op-
pous titles, instead of gratifying the vanity of the
Persian, served only to admonish him of his duty,
and to inflame in his soul the ambition of restor-
ing, in their full splendour, the religion and
empire of Cyrus.

Reforma-
tion of the
Magian
religion.

1. During the long servitude of Persia under
the Macedonian and the Parthian yoke, the na-
tions of Europe and Asia had mutually adopted

Mashelot. *Bibliothèque Orientale*, vol. ii., p. 107. Stephanus
Cassius, *Liber Historia Sacra*, B. viii., p. 107. Stephanus
Dynast., p. 108.

¹ See Mose Chorenensis, L. ii., c. 65-71.

and corrupted each other's superstitions. The Arsacides, indeed, practised Chaldeanism; the Magi, but they digested and interwoven it with a various mixture of Persian, Indian, and Chinese, and even of Zoroastrian, philosophy. — This still reverend religion, though in its complete and mysterious language, in which the ^{scriptures} were composed,^a opened a field of dispute to seventy schools, which explained the fundamental doctrines of the religion, and were all indifferently derided by a crowd of infidels, who denied alike divine mission and prophecies of the prophet. — Controversy, the idolatry, despite the abomination of heretics, the unbelievers, by the infallible decision of a general council, the pious Artaxerxes summoned the Magi from all parts of his dominions. These priests, who had so long sighed in contempt and obscurity, obeyed the welcome summons; and on the appointed day appeared to the number of about nine hundred. But as the debates of

the Magi and Pridoux, vol. ii. p. 100.

Mysteries.

that the Greek writers, who lived almost in the age of Darius, agree in placing the era of Zoroaster many hundred, or even thousand, years before their own times. The judicious criticism of Mr. Moyle prepossessed, and maintained by his uncle, Dr. Pridoux, the antiquity of the Persian prophecies, in his work, vol. ii.

^a That ancient idiom, called Pehlvi, or Pahlavi, is still extant, and is now (if it is allowed as authentic) sufficiently warrants the antiquity of those writings, which M. de Gommeil has brought into Europe, and translated into French.

CHAP. VIII. ~~that~~^{the} effects an assembly could not have been given by the authority of reason, or influenced by the art of policy, the Persian synod was reduced, by successive operations, to forty thousand, to four hundred, to forty, and at last to seven Magi, the most respected for their learning and piety. One of these, Erisoph, a young but holy prelate, received from the hands of his brethren three cups of copious wine. He drank them off, and instantaneously fell into a long and profound sleep. As soon as he awoke, he related to the king and to the believing multitude, his journey to heaven, and his intimate conferences with the Deity. Every doubt was silenced by this supernatural evidence, and the articles of the faith of Zoroaster were taught with equal authority, and precision, as those of the sacred system of that celebrated prophet will be found in the following chapter.

It is difficult to illustrate many of the most important transactions, both in peace and war, with the Roman empire.

The great and fundamental article of the Persian theology; two principles, good and evil, an attempt of eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of moral

¹ Hyde de Bohemia, tom. viii. Part. c. 21.

² I have principally drawn this account from the Zendavesta of M. d'Anquetil, and the Sodier, subject to Mr. Hyde's notes. It must, however, be confessed, that the entire obscurity of a great part of the figurative style of the Persian language, makes it difficult to ascertain the exact meaning of many of the terms used in this chapter.

and physical evil, with the attributes of a beneficent Creator and Governor of the world. The first and original Being, in whom, or by whom, the universe exists, is denominated in the writings of Zoroaster, ~~the blind~~; but it must be confessed, that this infinite substance seems rather a metaphysical abstraction of the mind, than a real object endowed with self-consciousness, or possessed of moral perfections. From either the blind, or the intelligent operation of this infinite time, which bears but too near an affinity with the ~~class of the Greeks~~, the two secondary but active principles of the universe, were from all eternity produced, Ormusd and Ahriman, each of them possessed of the powers of creation; but each disposed, by his invariable nature, to exercise them with different designs. The principle of good is eternally absorbed in light; the principle of evil eternally buried in darkness. The wise benevolence of Ormusd formed man capable of vice, and abundantly provided his fair habitation with the means of happiness. By his vigilant providence, the motion of the planets, the order of the seasons, and the temperate mixture of the elements, are preserved. But the malice of Ahriman has long since pierced Ormusd's egg; or, in other words, has violated the harmony of his works. Since that fatal eruption, the most minute articles of good and evil are intimately intermingled and agitated together; the rankest poisons spring up amidst the most salutary plants; deluges, earthquakes, and

CHAP. conflagrations, attest the conflict of nature, and
 VIII. the little world of man is perpetually shaken by
 vice and misfortune. While the rest of human
 kind are led away captives in the chains of their
 infernal enemy, the faithful Persian alone reserves
 his religious adoration for his friend and protector
 Ormuzd, and fights under his banner of light, in
 the full confidence that he shall, in the last day,
 share the glory of his triumph. At that decisive
 period, the enlightened wisdom of goodness will
 render the power of Ormuzd superior to the fu-
 riouſ malice of his rival. Ahriman and his fol-
 lowers, disarmed and subdued, will sink into their
 native darkness; and virtue will maintain the e-
 ternal peace and harmony of the universe.¹

Religious worship.

The theology of Zoroaster was darkly comprehended by foreigners, and even by the far greater number of his disciples; but the most careless observers were struck with the philosophic simplicity of the Persian worship. "That people," says Herodotus,² "rejects the use of temples, " of altars, and of statues, and smiles at the folly " of those nations, who imagine that the gods " are sprung from, or bear any affinity with, the " human nature. The tops of the highest mount-

¹ The modern Persians (and in some degree the Soderyans) have turned into the first and omnipotent cause, while they degrade Ahriman into an inferior but rebellious spirit. Their desire of proselyting the mahometans may have contributed to refine their theological system.

² Herodotus, I, i, &c. 131. But Dr. Poggenpohl thinks, with me, that the use of temples was absolutely prohibited in the religion of Zoroaster.

" tains are the places chosen for sacrifices. Hymns CHAP.
 " and prayers are the principal worship; the su- VIII.
 " preme God who fills the wide circle of hea-
 " ven, is the object to whom they are addressed." Yet, at the same time, the true spirit of a polytheist, the Persians them of adoring earth, water, fire, the winds, and the sun and moon. But the Persians of every age have denied the charge, and explained the equivocal conduct, which might appear to give a colour to it. The elements, and more particularly fire, light, and the sun, whom they called Mithra, were the objects of their religious reverence, because they considered them as the purest symbols, the most perfect productions, and the most powerful agents of the divine power and nature.*

Every mode of religion, to make a deep and lasting impression on the human mind, must exercise our obedience, by enjoining practices of devotion, for which we can assign no reason; and must acquire our assent by inculcating moral duties analogous to those which regulate our hearts. The religion of Zoroaster was abundantly provided with the former, and possessed a sufficient portion of the latter. At the age of puberty, the faithful Persian was invested with a mysterious girdle, the badge of the divine protection; and from that moment, all the actions of his life, even the most indifferent, or trifling, were under

* Hyde de Balig. Pers. c. 8. Notwithstanding all their distinctions and protestations, which seem sincere enough, their tyrants, the mohammedans, have constantly stigmatised them as idolatrous worshippers of the fire.

CHAP. were sanctified by their peculiar prayers, ejaculations, or genuflexions; the omission of which, under any circumstances, was a grievous sin, not inferior in guilt to the violation of the moral duties. The moral duties, however, of justice, mercy, liberality, &c. were in their turn required of the disciple of Zoroaster, who wished to escape the persecution of Ahriman, and to live with Ormusd in a blissful eternity, where the degree of felicity will be exactly proportioned to the degree of virtue and piety.*

Encouragement of agriculture.

But there are some remarkable instances, in which Zoroaster lays aside the prophet, assumes the legislator, and discovers a liberal concern for private and public happiness, seldom to be found among the groveling or visionary schemes of superstition. Fasting and celibacy, the common means of purchasing the divine favour, he condemns with abhorrence, as a criminal violation of the best gifts of providence. The magian religion, is obliged to kill children, to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry land of Persia, and to work out his salvation by pursuing all the labours of agriculture. We may quote from the Zandavesta a wise and benevolent maxim, which compensates for all an absurdity. He who sows the ground,

* See the Sadder, the smallest part of which consists of precepts. The ceremonies enjoined are baptism and trifling with genuflexions, prayers, &c. were required whenever the Persian cut his nails, or intake water, or as often as — sacred girdle. Sadder, Art. 14, 50, 60.

" care and diligence, acquires a greater stock
 " of religious merit, than he can gain by the
 " repetition of ten thousand prayers." In the
 spring of every year a festival was celebrated, des-
 tined to represent the primitive equality, and
 the present affection, of mankind. The stately
 kings of Persia, exchanging their vain pomp for
 more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the
 humblest but most useful of their subjects. On
 that day the husbandmen were admitted, with-
 out distinction, to the table of the king and his
 satraps. The monarch accepted their petitions,
 inquired into their grievances, and conversed
 with them on the most equal terms. From
 " your labours, was he accustomed to say (and
 " to say with truth, if not with sincerity), from
 " your labours, we receive our subsistence; you
 " derive your tranquillity from our vigilance;
 " since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to
 " each other, let us live together like brothers
 " in concord and amity. Such a festival must
 indeed have degenerated, in the course of so
 long a period, from a political representation;
 but it was at least a comedy well worthy of a
 royal audience, and which might sometimes im-
 print a salutary lesson on the mind of a young
 prince.

Had Zoroaster, in all his institutions, ~~universally~~<sup>Power of
the magi.</sup> supported this exalted chapter, his name
 would deserve a place with those of Numa and

¹⁷ Zendavesta, tom. 4, p. 224, and Precis du Systeme de Zoroastre, tom. iii.

¹⁸ Hyde de Religione Persarum, c. 19.

CHAP. C. *Cannicius*, and his system would be justly entitled to all the applause, which it has pleased some of our divines, and even some of our philosophers, to bestow on it. But in that motely composition, dictated by reason and passion, by enthusiasm and by selfish motives, some useful and sublime truths were disgraced by a mixture of the most abject and dangerous superstition. The magi, or sacerdotal order, were extremely numerous, since, ~~as we have already seen~~, fourscore thousand of them were convened in a general council.² Their forces were multiplied by discipline. A regular hierarchy was diffused through all the provinces of Persia; and the Archimagus, who resided at Balch, was respected as the visible head of the church, and the lawful successor of Zoroaster.³ The property of the magi was very considerable. Besides the less invidious possession of a large share of the most fertile lands of Media,⁴ they levied a general tax on the fortunes and the industry of the Persians. “Though your good works,” says the interested prophet, “exceed in number the leaves of the

² Hyde de Religious Persorum, c. 28. Both Hyde and Pridanus affect to apply to the magian, the terms consecrated to the christian hierarchy.

³ Athanasius Monachus, xxiii, 6. He informs us (as far as we may credit him) of two obvious particulars: 1. That the magi derived some of their most secret doctrines from the Indian brachmans; and, 2. That they were a tribe or family, as well as order.

⁴ The divine institution of tythes exhibits a singular instance of conformity between the law of Zoroaster and that of Moses. Those who cannot otherwise account for it, may suppose, if they please, that the hand of the latter times inserted so useful an interpolation into the writings of their prophet.

" trees, the drops of rain, the stars in the hea-
 " ven, or the sands on the sea-shore, they will
 " all be unprofitable to you, unless they are
 " accepted by the ~~deator~~, or priest. To obtain
 " the acceptance of this guide to salvation, you
 " must ~~faithfully~~ pay him *tythes* of all you pos-
 " sess, of your goods, of your lands, and of your
 " money. If the ~~deator~~ be satisfied, your soul
 " will escape hell tortures; you will secure praise
 " in this world, and happiness in the next. For
 " the destours are the teachers of religion; they
 " know all things, and they deliver all men."

These convenient maxims of reverence and implicit faith were doubtless imprinted with care on the tender minds of youth, since the magi were the masters of education in Persia, and to their hands the children even of the royal family were intrusted.* The Persian priests, who were of a speculative genius, preserved and investigated the secrets of oriental philosophy, and acquired, either by superior knowledge or superior art, the reputation of being well versed in some occult sciences, which have derived their appellation from the magi.^x Those of more active dispositions mixed with the world in courts and cities; and it is observed, that the administration of Artaxerxes was in a great measure directed by the counsels of the sacerdotal order, whose dignity, either from policy or devotion, that prince restored to its ancient splendour.^y

^{*} Suidas, Art. S.

^x Plato in Alcibiad.

^y Pliny (Hist. Natur. l. xxx, c. 1) observes, that magic held man-kind by the triple chain of religion, of physick, and of astronomy.

^z Agathias, l. iv, p. 194.

CHAP.
VIII.
~~Spirit of
persecution.~~

The first counsel of the magi was agreeable to the unsociable genius of their faith;^a to the practice of ancient kings,^b and even to the example of their legislator, who had fallen a victim to a religious war, excited by his own intolerant zeal.^c By an edict of Artaxerxes, the exercise of every worship, except that of Zoroaster, was severely prohibited. The temples of the Parthians, and the statues of their deified monarchs, were thrown down with ignominy.^d The sword of Aristotle (which was the name given by the Orientals to the polytheism and philosophy of the Greeks) was easily broken;^e the flames of persecution soon reached the more stubborn Jews and christians;^f nor did they spare the heretics of their own nation and religion. The majesty of Ormuzd, who was jealous of a rival, was seconded by the despotism of Artaxerxes, who could not suffer a rebel; and the schismatics within his vast empire were soon reduced to the inconsiderable number of eighty thousand.^g This spirit

^a Mr. Hume, in the *Natural History of Religion*, sagaciously remarks, that the most refined and philosophic sects are constantly the most intolerant.

^b Cicero de Legibus, ii, 10. Xerxes, by the advice of the magi, destroyed the temples of Greece.

^c Hyde de Relig. Persar. c. 23, 24. D'Herbelot Bibliothéque Orientale Zérahel. Life of Zoroaster, in tom. ii of the Zendavesta.

^d Compare Moses of Chôrêne, l. ii, c. 74, with Ammian. Marcellin. xxiii, 6. Hereafter I shall make use of these passages.

^e Rabbi Abraham in the Tarikh Schiekard, p. 108, 109.

^f Basnage Histoire des Juifs, l. viii, c. 3. Suetonius, l. II, c. 1. Mænus, who suffered an ignominious death, may be deemed a magician, as well as a christian heretic.

^g Hyde de Religione Persar. c. 21.

of persecution reflects dishonour on the religion of Zoroaster; but as it was not productive of any civil commotion, it served to strengthen the new monarchy, by uniting all the various inhabitants of Persia in the spirit of religious zeal.

II. Artaxerxes, by his valour and conduct, had wrested the sceptre of the East from the ancient family of Parthia. There still remained the more difficult task of establishing, throughout the vast extent of Persia, a uniform and vigorous administration. The weak indulgence of the Arsacides had resigned to their sons and brothers the principal provinces, and the greatest offices of the kingdom, in the nature of hereditary possessions. The *vitaæ*, or eighteen most powerful satraps, were permitted to assume the regal title; and the vain pride of the monarch was delighted with a nominal dominion over so many vassal kings. Even tribes of barbarians in their mountains, and the Greek cities of Upper Asia,¹ within their walls, scarcely acknowledged, or seldom obeyed, any superior; and the Parthian empire exhibited, under other names, a lively image of the feudal system which has since prevailed in Europe.² But the active vic-

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VIII.

CHAP. VIII. ^{top, at the head of a numerous and disciplined army, visited in person every province of Persia.} The defeat of the boldest rebels, and the reduction of the strongest fortifications,⁴ diffused the terror of his arms, and prepared the way for the peaceful reception of his authority. An obstinate resistance was fatal to the chiefs; but their followers were treated with lenity.⁵ A cheerful submission was rewarded with honours and riches; but the prudent Artaxerxes, ^{suffering no person except himself to assume the title of king, abolished every intermediate power between the} Extent and throne and the people. His kingdom, nearly population of Persia. equal in extent to modern Persia, was, on every side, bounded by the sea, or by great rivers; by the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Araxes, the Oxus, and the Indus, by the Caspian sea, and the gulf of Persia.⁶ That country was computed

⁴ Agathias, ii, 164. ⁵ See Herodotus, viii, 367, 371, 375) relates the siege of the island of *Agesci* in the Tigris, with some circumstances not unlike the story of *Nestor* and *Scylla*.

⁶ Agathias, ii, 164. The princes of Segestan defended their independence during many years. As romances generally transport to an ancient period the events of their own time, it is not impossible that the fabulous exploits of Rustam, prince of Segestan, may have been grafted on this real history.

We can scarcely attribute to the Persian monarchy the conquest of Gedrosia or Maoran, which extends along the Indus, from Cape Jax (the promontory Capellae) to Cape Gedrosia. At the time of Alexander, and probably many years afterwards, it was thinly inhabited by a savage people of Ichthyophagi, or fishermen, who knew no arts, who acknowledged no master, and who were divided by inhospitable deserts from the rest of the world. (See Arrian de Indicis). In the twelfth century, the little town of Tazir (supposed by M. d'Anville to be the Tell of Ptolemy) was peopled and enriched

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to contain, in the last century, five hundred and fifty-four cities, sixty thousand villages, and about forty millions of souls. If we compare the administration of the house of Sasan with that of the house of Seld, the political influence of the magians with that of the mahometan religion, we shall probably infer, that the kingdom of Armenia contained at least as great a number of cities, villages, and inhabitants. But it must likewise be confessed, that in every age the want of harbours on the sea-coast, and the scarcity of fresh water in the inland provinces, have been very unfavourable to the commerce and agriculture of the Persians; who, in the calculation of their numbers, seem to have indulged one of the meanest, though most common, articles of national vanity. *

As soon as the ambitious mind of Artaxerxes had triumphed over the resistance of his vassals, he began to threaten the neighbouring states, who, during the long number of his predecessors, had insulted Persia with impunity. He obtained some easy victories over the ~~W~~ild ~~V~~ery ~~C~~hiefs and the ~~e~~xminate Indians; but the Romans were an enemy, who, by their past injuries and present power, deserved the utmost efforts of his arms. A forty years tranquillity, the fruit of valour and

enriched by the resort of the Arabian magnates. (See *Geographic Nubiene*, p. 58, and *d'Anville Geographie d'Asie*, tom. II, p. 283). In the first age, the whole country was divided between three princes, one mahometan and two idolaters, who maintained their independence against the successors of Snew Abbas. (*Voyages de Tavernier*, part i, l. v, p. 635).

* Chardin, tom. iii, c. 1, 2, 3.

Recapitu-
lation of
the war be-
tween the
Parthian
and Roman
empire.

CHAP. moderation, had succeeded the victories of Trajan. During the period that elapsed from the accession of Marcus to the reign of Alexander, the Roman and the Parthian empires were twice engaged in war; and although the whole strength of the Arsacides contended with a part only of the forces of Rome, the event was most commonly in favour of the latter. Macrinus, indeed, prompted by his precarious situation, and pusillanimous temper, gave up the peace at the expense of near two millions of our money; but the generals of Marcus, the emperor Severus, and his son, erected many trophies in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria. Among their exploits, the imperfect relation of which would have unseasonably interrupted the more important series of domestic revolutions, we shall only mention the repeated calamities of the two great cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

Cities of
Seleucia
and Cte-
siphon.

Seleucia, on the western bank of the Tigris, about forty-five miles to the north of ancient Babylon, was the capital of the Macedonian conquests in Upper Asia.* Many ages after the fall of their empire, Seleucia retained the genuine characters of a Grecian colony, arts, military virtue, and the love of freedom. The independent republic was governed by a senate of three hundred nobles; the people consisted of

* Dion, l. xxviii, p. 1335.

For the precise situation of Babylon, Seleucia, Ctesiphon, Mardin, and Bagdad, cities often mentioned with each other, see an excellent Geographical Tract of M. d'Anville, in Mem. de l'Academie, tom. xxx.

six hundred thousand citizens ; the walls were strong, and as long as concord prevailed among the several orders of the state, they viewed with contempt the power of the Parthian; but the madness of faction was sometimes provoked to implore the dangerous aid of the common enemy, who was posted almost at the gates of the colony.¹ The Parthian monarchs, like the Mogul sovereigns of Hindostan, delighted in the pastoral life of their Scythian ancestors ; and the imperial camp was frequently pitched in the plain of Ctesiphon, on the western bank of the Tigris, at the distance of only three miles from Seleucia.² The innumerable attendants on luxury and despotism resorted to the court, and the little village of Ctesiphon insensibly swelled into a great city.³ Under the reign of Marcus, the Roman generals penetrated as far as Ctesiphon and Seleucia. They were received as friends ^{A. D. 165.} by the Greek colony ; they attacked as enemies the seat of the Parthian kings ; yet both cities experienced the same destruction. The sack and conflagration of Seleucia, with the massacre of three hundred thousand of the inhabitants, tar-

¹ Tacit. Annal. 22, 22. Plin. Hist. Nat. vi, 26.

² This may be inferred from Strabo, l. xvi, p. 743.

³ That most curious traveller Bernier, who followed the camp of Aurengzebe from Dehli to Cashmir, describes, with great accuracy, the immense moving city. The guard of cavalry consisted of 35,000 men, that of infantry of 16,000. It was computed that the camp contained 150,000 horses, mules, and elephants ; 50,000 camels, 20,000 oxen, and between 300,000 and 400,000 persons. Almost all these followed the court, whose magnificence supported its industry.

CHAP. nished the glory of the Roman triumph.⁴ Seleucia, already exhausted by the neighbourhood
 VIII. of a too powerful rival, sunk under the fatal
 A. D. 198. blow; but Ctesiphon, in about thirty-three years, had sufficiently recovered its strength to maintain an obstinate siege against the emperor Severus. The city was, however, taken by assault; the king, who defended it in person, escaped with precipitation; an hundred thousand captives, and a rich booty, rewarded the fatigues of the Roman soldiers.⁵ Notwithstanding these misfortunes, Ctesiphon succeeded to Babylon and to Seleucia, as one of the great capitals of the East. In summer, the monarch of Persia enjoyed at Ecbatana the cool breezes of the mountains of Media; but the mildness of the climate engaged him to prefer Ctesiphon for his winter residence.

From these successful inroads the Romans derived no real or lasting benefit; nor did they attempt to preserve such distant conquests, separated from the provinces of the empire by a large tract of intermediate desert. The reduction of the kingdom of Osrhoene was an acquisition of less splendour indeed, but of a far more solid advantage. That little state occupied the northern and most fertile part of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. Edessa,

⁴ Dion, l. lxxi, p. 1178. Hist. August. p. 38. Eutrop. viii, 10. Euseb. in Chronic. Quadratus (quoted in the Augustan history) attempted to vindicate the Romans, by alleging, that the citizens of Seleucia had first violated their faith.

⁵ Dion, l. lxxx, p. 1263. Herodian 2, 2, p. 120. Hist. August. p. 70.

its capital, was situated about twenty miles beyond the former of those rivers; and the inhabitants, since the time of Alexander,^x were a mixed race of Greeks, Arabs, Syrians, and Armenians.^y The feeble sovereigns of Osrhoene, placed on the dangerous verge of two contending empires, were attached from inclination to the Parthian cause; but the superior power of Rome exacted from them a reluctant homage, which is still attested by their medals. After the conclusion of the Parthian war under Marcus, it was judged prudent to exact some substantial pledges of their doubtful fidelity. Forts were constructed in several parts of the country, and a Roman garrison was fixed in the strong town of Nisibis. During the troubles that followed the death of Commodus, the princes of Osrhoene attempted to shake off the yoke; but the stern policy of Severus confirmed their dependence,^z and the perfidy of Caracalla completed the easy conquest. Abgarus, the last king of Edessa, was sent in ^{a. d. 216.} chains to Rome, his kingdom reduced into a province, and his capital dignified with the rank of colony; and thus the Kingdom, about ten years before the fall of the Parthian monarchy,

^x The polished citizens of Antioch called those of Edessa mixed barbarians. It was, however, some praise, that of the three dialects of the Syriac, the purest and most elegant (the Aramaean) was spoke at Edessa. This remark M. Bayer (*Hist. Edess.* p. 5), has borrowed from George of Malatia, a Syrian writer.

^y Dicq. I. lxxiv, p. 1248, 1249, 1250. M. Bayer has neglected to use this most important passage.

CHAP. obtained a firm and permanent establishment
VIII. beyond the Euphrates.*

~~Artaxerxes claims the provinces of Asia, and war against the Romans,~~ Prudence as well as glory might have justified ~~claims the provinces of Asia, and been confined to the defence or the acquisition~~ declares openly avowed a far more extensive design of conquest; and he thought himself able to support his lofty pretensions by the arms of reason as well as by those of power. Cyrus, he alleged, had first subdued, and his successors had for a long time possessed, the whole extent of Asia, as far as the Propontis and the Ægean sea; the provinces of Caria and Ionia, under their empire, had been governed by Persian satraps, and all Egypt, to the confines of Æthiopia, had acknowledged their sovereignty.^a Their rights had been suspended, though not destroyed, by a long usurpation; and as soon as he received the Persian diadem which birth and successful valour had placed upon his head, the first great duty of his station called upon him to restore the ancient limits and splendour of the monarchy. The great king, therefore (such was the haughty style of his embassies to the emperor Alexander), commanded the Romans instantly to desist from

* This kingdom, from Oghoer, who gave a new name to the country, to the last Abgarus, had lasted 343 years. See the learned work of M. Bayer, *Historia Osrhoena et Edessana*.

^a Xenophon, in the preface to the *Cyropaedia*, gives a clear and magnificent idea of the extent of the empire of Cyrus. Herodotus (l. vii. c. 79, &c.) enters into a curious and particular description of the twenty great satrapies into which the Persian empire was divided by Darius Hystaspes.

all the provinces of his ancestors, and yielding ~~char~~
 to the Persians the empire of Asia, to content
 themselves with the undisturbed possession of
 Europe. This haughty mandate was delivered
 by four hundred of the tallest and most beauti-
 ful of the ~~Persians~~; who, by their fine horses,
 splendid arms, and rich apparel, displayed the
 pride and greatness of their master.^b Such an
 embassy was much less an offer of negotiation,
 than a declaration of war. Both Alexander
 Severus and Artaxerxes, collecting the military
 force of the ~~Roman and Persian~~ monarchies,
 resolved in this important contest to lead their
 armies in person.

If we credit what should seem the most authen-
 tic of all records, an oration, still extant, and ^{Pretended}
 delivered by the emperor himself to the senate,^c
 we must allow that the ^{victory of} ~~victory~~ ^{Alexander}
 Severus was not inferior to any of those formerly
 obtained over the Persians by the son of Philip.
 The army of ~~the~~ king consisted of one
 hundred and twenty thousand men clothed in
 complete armour of steel, of which were six
 phalanxes, with towers filled with archers on their
 backs, and of eighteen hundred chariots, armed
 with scythes. This formidable host, the like of
 which is not to be found in eastern history, and
 has scarcely been imagined in eastern romance.

^b Herodian, vi, 209, 212.

^c There were two hundred scythed chariots at the battle of Ar-
 bela, ~~which~~ says of Darius. In the vast army of Tigranes, which
 was ~~commanded~~ by Lucullus, seventeen thousand horse only were

CHAP. was discomfited in a great battle, in which the
VIII. Roman Alexander approved himself an intrepid
 soldier and a skilful general. The great king
 fled before his valour; an immense booty, and
 the conquest of Mesopotamia, were the immediate
 fruits of this signal victory. Such are the
 circumstances of this ostentatious and impro-
 bable relation, dictated, as it too plainly appears,
 by the vanity of the monarch, adorned by the
 unblushing servility of his flatterers, and received
 without contradiction by a distant and obsequious
 senate.^a Far from being inclined to believe
 that the arms of Alexander obtained any memo-
 rable advantage over the Persians, we are in-
 duced to suspect, that all this blaze of imaginary
 glory was designed to conceal some real dis-
 grace.

completely armed. Antiochus brought fifty-four elephants into the field against the Romans. By his frequent wars and negotiations with the people of India, he had once collected an hundred and six of those great animals; but it may be questioned, whether the most powerful monarch of Hindostan ever formed a line of battle of seven hundred elephants. Instead of three or four thousand elephants, which the great Mogul was supposed to possess, Tavernier (*Voyage*, part ii, l. i, p. 198) discovered, by a more accurate inquiry, that he had only five hundred for his baggage, and eighty or ninety in the service of war. The Greeks have varied with regard to the number which Porus brought into the field; but Quintus Curtius (viii, 15), in this instance judicious and moderate, is contented with eighty-five elephants, distinguished by their size and strength. In Siam, where these animals are the most numerous, and the most enormous, eighteen elephants are allowed as a sufficient proportion for each of the nine brigades into which a just army is divided. The whole number, of one hundred and sixty-two elephants of war, ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~hence~~ ^{hence} be doubled. *Hist. des Voyages*, tom. iii, p. 260.

^a Hist. August, p. 128.

Our suspicions are confirmed by the authority of a contemporary historian, who mentions the virtues of Alexander with respect, and his faults with candour. He describes the judicious plan which had been formed for the conduct of the war.¹ The Roman armies were destined to invade Persia at the same time, and by different routes. But the operations of the campaign, though wisely concerted, were not executed either with ability or success. The first of these armies, as soon as it had entered the marshy plains of Babylon, towards the annual reflux of the Euphrates and the Tigris, was encumbered by the superior numbers, and destroyed by the arrows, of the enemy. The alliance of Chosroes, king of Armenia,² and the long tract of mountainous country, in which the Persian cavalry was of little service, opened a secure entrance into the heart of Media, to the second of the Roman armies. These brave troops laid waste the adjacent provinces, and obtained several successful actions against Artaxerxes. But the review of the numerous army was imprudent, or at least unfortunate. In repassing the mountains, great numbers of soldiers perished by the badness of the roads, and

More probable account of the war.

¹ M. de Tillemont has already observed, that Herodian's geography is somewhat confused.

² Moses of Chorene (*Hist. Armen.* l. ii. c. 71) illustrates this invasion of Media, by asserting that Chosroes, king of Armenia, defeated Artaxerxes, and pursued him to the confines of India. The exploits of Chosroes have been magnified; and he acted as a dependent ally to the Romans.

CHAP. the severity of the winter season. It had been
VIII. resolved, that whilst these two great detachments
penetrated into the opposite extremes of the Per-
sian dominions, the main body, under the com-
mand of Alexander himself, should support their
attack, by invading the centre of the kingdom.
But the unexperienced youth, influenced by his
mother's counsels, and perhaps by his own fears,
deserted the bravest troops, and the fairest pro-
spect of victory; and after consuming in Meso-
potamia an inactive and inglorious summer, he
led back to Antioch an army diminished by sick-
ness, and provoked by disappointment. The
behaviour of Artaxerxes had been very different.
Flying with rapidity from the hills of Media to
the marshes of the Euphrates, he had everywhere
opposed the invaders in person; and in either
fortune, had united with the ablest conduct the
most undaunted resolution. But in several ob-
~~sistent engagements~~ against the veteran legions
of Rome, the Persian monarch had lost the flower
of his troops. Even his victories had weakened
his power. The favourable opportunities of the
absence of Alexander, and of the confusion that
followed that emperor's death, presented them-
selves in vain to his ambition. Instead of ex-
pelling the Romans, as he pretended, from the
continent of Asia, he found himself unable to
wrest from their hands the little province of Me-
sopotamia.⁵

⁵ For the account of this war, see Herodotus, I. vi, p. 209, 212. The old abbreviators and modern compilers have blindly followed the Augustan history.

The reign of Artaxerxes, which from the last defeat of the Parthians lasted only fourteen years, forms a memorable era in the history of the East, and even in that of Europe. His character seems to have been marked by those bold and commanding features, that generally distinguish the princes who conquer, from those who inherit, an empire. Till the last period of the Persian monarchy, his code of laws was respected as the ground-work of their civil and religious policy.^{*} Several of his maxims are preserved. One of them in particular discovers a deep insight into the constitution of government. "The authority of the prince," said Artaxerxes, "must be defended by a military force; that force can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes must, at last, fall upon agriculture; and agriculture can never flourish except under the protection of justice and moderation."[†] Artaxerxes founded his new empire, and his ambitious designs extended from India to Sarmatia, a son not unworthy of his father. His designs were too extensive for the power of Persia, and served only to involve both nations in a long series of destructive wars and reciprocal calamities.

* Eutychius, tom. ii, p. 180, vers. Pocock. The great Chosroes Noushwan sent the code of Artaxerxes to all his subjects, as the invariable rule of their conduct.

[†] D'Herbelot Bibliothèque Orientale, au mot *Ardshir*. We may observe, that after an ancient period of fables, and a long interval of darkness, the modern histories of Persia begin to assume an air of truth with the dynasty of the Sassanides.

CHAP.
VIII.

Military
power of
the Per-
sians.

The Persians, long since civilized and corrupted, were very far from possessing the martial independence, and the intrepid hardiness, both of mind and body, which have rendered the northern barbarians masters of the world. The science of war, that constituted the more rational force of Greece and Rome, as it now does of Europe, never made any considerable progress in the East. Those disciplined evolutions which harmonize and animate a civilized multitude were unknown to the Persians. They were equally unskilled in the arts of constructing, besieging, or defending regular fortifications. They trusted more to their numbers than to their courage; more to their courage than to their discipline. The infantry was a half-armed spiritless crowd of peasants, levied in haste by the allurements of plunder, and as easily dispersed by a victory as by a defeat. The monarch and his nobles transported into the camp the pride and luxury of the seraglio. Their military operations were impeded by a useless train of women, eunuchs, horses, and camels; and in the midst of a successful campaign, the Persian host was often separated or destroyed by an unexpected famine.*

Their in-
fantry con-
temptible.

Their ca-
valry ex-
cellent.

But the nobles of Persia, in the bosom of luxury and despotism, preserved a strong sense of personal gallantry and national honour. From

* Herodian, 1. vi, p. 214. Ammianus Marcellinus, 1. xxiii, c. 6. Some differences may be observed between the two historians, the natural effects of the changes produced by a century and a half.

the age of seven years they were taught to speak CHAP.
truth, to shoot with the bow, and to ride; and it VIII.
was universally confessed, that in the two last of
these arts, they had made a more than common
proficiency.¹ The most distinguished youth were
educated under the monarch's eye, practised their
exercises in the gate of his palace, and were se-
verely trained up to the habits of temperance and
obedience, in their long and laborious parties of
hunting. In every province, the satrap maintained
a like school of military virtue. The Persian
nobles (so natural is the idea of feudal tenures)
received from the king's bounty lands and houses,
on the condition of their service in war. They
were ready on the first summons to mount on
horseback, with a martial and splendid train of
followers, and to join the numerous bodies of
guards, who were carefully selected from amongst
the most robust slaves, and the bravest adventurers
of Asia. These armies, both of light and of heavy
cavalry, equally formidable by the impetuosity of
their charge, and the rapidity of their retreat,
threatened, as an impending cloud, the eastern
provinces of the declining empire of Rome.^m

¹ The Persians are still the most skilful horsemen, and their horses the finest in the East.

^m From Herodotus, Xenophon, Herodian, Ammianus, Chardin,
&c. I have extracted such probable accounts of the Persian nobility,
as seem either common to every age, or particular to that of the Sas-
anides.

CHAP. IX.

The state of Germany till the invasion of the barbarians, in the time of the emperor Decius.

CHAP.
IX.

THE government and religion of Persia have deserved some notice, from their connection with the decline and fall of the Roman empire. We shall occasionally mention the Scythian, or Sarmatian tribes, which, with their arms and horses, their flocks and herds, their wives and families, wandered over the immense plains which spread themselves from the Caspian sea to the Vistula, from the confines of Persia to those of Germany. But the warlike Germans, who first resisted, then invaded, and at length overturned the western monarchy of Rome, will occupy ~~much~~ an important place in this history, and possess a stronger, and, if we may use the expression, a more domestic, claim to our attention and regard. The most civilized nations of modern Europe issued from the woods of Germany, and in the rude institutions of those barbarians we may still distinguish the original principles of our present laws and manners. In their primitive state of simplicity and independence, the Germans were surveyed by the discerning eye, and delineated by the masterly pencil, of Tacitus, the first of historians who applied the science of philosophy to the study of facts. The expressiveness and conciseness of his descriptions has deserved to ex-

ercise the diligence of innumerable antiquarians, and to excite the genius and penetration of the philosophic historians of our own times. The subject, however various and important, has already been so ~~recently~~, so ably, and so successfully discussed, that it is now grown familiar to the reader, and difficult to the writer. We shall therefore content ourselves with observing, and indeed with repeating, some of the most important circumstances of climate, of manners, and of institutions, which rendered the wild barbarians of Germany such formidable enemies to the Roman power.

CHAP.
IX.Extent of
Germany.

Ancient Germany, excluding from its independent limits the province westward of the Rhine, which had submitted to the Roman yoke, extended itself over a third part of Europe. Almost the whole of modern Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Livonia, Prussia, and the greater part of Poland, were peopled by the various tribes of one great nation, whose complexion, manners, and language denoted a common origin, and preserved a striking resemblance. On the west, ancient Germany was divided by the Rhine from the Gallic, and on the south, by the Danube, from the Illyrian provinces of the empire. A ridge of hills, rising from the Danube, and called the Carpathian mountains, covered Germany on the side of Dacia or Hungary. The eastern frontier was faintly marked by the mutual fears of the Germans and the Sarmatians, and was often confounded by the mixture of warring and confederating tribes of the two nations.

C.HAP. In the remote darkness of the north, the ancients
 IX. imperfectly descried a frozen ocean that lay beyond the Baltic sea, and beyond the peninsula, or islands^a of Scandinavia.

Climate. Some ingenious writers^b have suspected that Europe was much colder formerly than it is at present; and the most ancient descriptions of the climate of Germany tend exceedingly to confirm their theory. The general complaints of intense frost, and eternal winter, are perhaps little to be regarded, since we have no method of reducing to the accurate standard of the thermometer, the feelings, or the expressions of an orator, born in the happier regions of Greece or Asia. But I shall select two remarkable circumstances of a less equivocal nature. 1. The great rivers which covered the Roman provinces, the Rhine and the Danube, were frequently frozen over, capable of supporting the most enormous weights. The barbarians, who often chose that severe season for their inroads, transported, without apprehension or danger, their numerous armies, their

^a The modern philosophers of Sweden seem agreed that the shores of the Baltic gradually sink in a regular proportion, which they have ventured to estimate at half an inch every year. Twenty centuries ago, the flat country of Scandinavia must have been covered by the sea; while the high lands rise above the water, now many islands of various forms and dimensions. Such, indeed, is the notion given us by Mela, Pliny, and Tacitus, of the vast countries round the Baltic. See in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xi and xiv, a large abstract of Dalin's History of Sweden, composed in the Swedish language.

^b In particular, Mr. Hume, his *Essays ou Bos*, and M. Pelloutier, *Hist. des Celtes*, tom.

Cavalry, and their heavy waggons, over a vast CHAP.
and solid bridge of ice.² Modern ages have not IX.

presented an instance of a like phenomenon.

2. The rein-deer, that useful animal, from whom

the savage of the north derives the best comforts

of his dreary life, is of a constitution that sup-

ports, and even requires, the most intense cold.

He is found on the rock of Spitzberg, within ten

degrees of the pole; he seems to delight in the

snows of Lapland and Siberia; but at present he

cannot subsist much less multiply, in any country

to the south of the Baltic.³ In the time of Caesar,

the rein-deer, as well as the elk, and the wild

bull, was a native of the Hercynian forest, which

then overshadowed a great part of Germany and

Poland.⁴ The modern improvements sufficiently

explain the causes of the diminution of the cold.

These immense woods have been gradually cleared,

which intercepted from the earth the rays of the

sun.⁵ The moresses have been drained, and, in

proportion as the land has been cultivated, the air

has become more temperate.⁶

¹ Diodes Siculus, l. v, p. 340, edit. Wessel. Herodian, l. vi, p. 221. Jornandes, c. 55. On the banks of the Danube, the wine, when brought to table, was frequently frozen into great lumps, *frustis*, Ovid Epist. ex Ponto, l. iv, 7, 9, 10. Virgil, Georgic. l. iii, 365. The fact is confirmed by a soldier and a philosopher, who had experienced the intense cold of Thrace. See Xenophon, Anabasis, l. vii, p. 560, edit. Hutchinson.

² Buffon Histoire Naturelle, tom. xii, p. 78, 116.

³ Cæsar de Bell. Gallic. vi, 23, &c. The most inquisitive of the Germans were ignorant of its utmost limits, although some of them had travelled in it more than sixty days journey.

⁴ Cluverius (Germania Antiqua, l. iii, c. 47) investigates the small and scattered remains of the Hercynian wood.

CHAP. day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany.
IX. Although situated in the same parallel with the
finest provinces of France and England, that
country experiences the most rigorous cold.
The rein-deer are very numerous, the ground is
covered with deep and lasting snow, and the
great river of St. Lawrence is regularly frozen,
in a season when the waters of the Seine and
the Thames are usually free from ice.*

Its effects
on the na-
tives.

It is difficult to ascertain, and easy to exaggerate, the influence of the climate of ancient Germany over the minds and bodies of the natives. Many writers have supposed, and most have allowed, though, as it should seem, without any adequate proof, that the rigorous cold of the north was favourable to long life and generative vigour, that the women were more fruitful, and the human species more prolific, than in warmer or more temperate climates. We may assert, with greater confidence, that the keen air of Germany formed the large and masculine limbs of the natives, who were, in general, of a more lofty stature than the people of the south, gave them a kind of strength better adapted to violent exertions than to patient labour, and inspired them with constitutional bravery, which is the result of nerves and spirits. The severity of a

* Charlevoix *Histoire du Canada*.

¶ Olaus Rudbeck asserts, that the Swedish women often bear ten or twelve children, and not uncommonly twenty or thirty; but the authority of Rudbeck is questionable.

¶ In hoc artus, in hac corpora, que mirantur, exercunt. Tacit. Germania, 3, 20. Cluver. L 5, p. 14.

winter campaign, that chilled the courage of the ~~CHAP.~~
Roman troops, was scarcely felt by these hardy ^{IX.}
children of the north,^x who in their turn were
unable to resist the summer heats, and dissolved
away in languor and sickness under the beams
of an Italian sun.

There is not anywhere upon the globe, a large ^{Origin of}
tract of country, which we have discovered desti-
tute of inhabitants, or whose first population can
be fixed with any degree of historical certainty.
And yet, as the most philosophic minds can sel-
dom refrain from investigating the infancy of
great nations, our curiosity consumes itself in
toilsome and disappointed efforts. When Tacitus
considered the purity of the German blood, and
the forbidding aspect of the country, he was dis-
posed to pronounce those barbarians *indigenæ*, or
natives of the soil. We may allow with safety,
and perhaps with truth, that ancient Germany
was not originally peopled by any foreign col-
onies already formed into a political society;^m
but that the name and nation received their ex-
istence from the gradual union of some wander-

^x Plutarch's Mario. The Cimbri, by way of amusement, often
slept down mountainous snow on their broad shields.

The Romans made war in all climates, and by their excellent discipline were, in a great measure, preserved in health and vigour. It may be remarked, that man is the only animal which can live and multiply in every country from the equator to the poles. The hog seems to approach the nearest to our species in this privilege.

^m Tacit. German. c. 3. The emigration of the Gauls followed the course of the Danube, and discharged itself on Greece and Asia. Tacitus could discover only one inconsiderable tribe that retained any traces of a Gallic origin.

CHAP. ing savages of the Hercynian woods. To assert
 IX. those savages to have been the spontaneous
 production of the earth which they inhabited,
 would be a rash inference, condemned by religion,
 and unwarranted by reason.

Fables and Such rational doubt is but ill-suited with the
 conjectures. genius of popular vanity. Among the nations
 who have adopted the Mosaic history of the
 world, the ark of Noah has been of the same use,
 as was formerly to the Greeks and Romans the
 siege of Troy. On a narrow basis of acknow-
 ledged truth, an immense but rude superstructure
 of fable has been erected; and the wild Irishman,^{*}
 as well as the wild Tartar,[†] could point out the
 individual son of Japhet, from whose loins his
 ancestors were lineally descended. The last
 century abounded with antiquarians of profound
 learning and easy faith, who, by the dim light
 of legends and traditions, of conjectures and
 etymologies, conducted the great grandchildren
 of Noah from the tower of Babel to the ex-
 tremities of the globe. Of these judicious cri-

* According to Dr. Keating (*History of Ireland*; p. 13, 14), the giant Partholanus, who was the son of Searc, the son of Erc, the son of Sru, the son of Fragnant, the son of Fathacian, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah, landed on the coast of Munster, the 14th day of May, in the year of the world one thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight. Though he succeeded in his great enterprise, the loose behaviour of his wife rendered his domestic life very unhappy, and provoked him to such a degree, that he killed—her favourite greyhound. This, as the learned historian very properly observes, was the first instance of female falsehood and infidelity ever known in Ireland.

† *Genealogical History of the Tartars*, by Abulghazi Bahadur Khan.

tics, one of the most entertaining was Olaus CHAP.
Rudbeck, professor in the university of Upsal.^P
IX
Whatever is celebrated either in history or fable,
this zealous patriot ascribes to his country. From
Sweden (which formed so considerable a part of
ancient Germany) the Greeks themselves de-
rived their alphabetical characters, their astro-
nomy, and their religion. Of that delightful re-
gion (for such it appeared to the eyes of a native)
the Atlantis of Plato, the country of the Hyper-
boreans, the gardens of the Hesperides, the Fortu-
nate islands, and even the Elysian fields, were
all but faint and imperfect transcripts. A clime
so profusely favoured by nature, could not long
remain desert after the flood. The learned Rud-
beck allows the family of Noah a few years to
multiply from eight to about twenty thousand
persons. He then disperses them into small col-
onies to replenish the earth, and to propagate
the human species. The German or Swedish de-
tachment (which marched, if I am not mistaken,
under the command of Askenaz, the son of Gomer,
the son of Japhet) distinguished itself by a more
than common diligence in the prosecution of this
great work. The northern hive cast its swarms
over the greatest part of Europe, Africa, and Asia;
and (to use the author's metaphor) the blood cir-
culated from the extremities to the heart.

But all this well-laboured system of German
antiquities is annihilated by a single fact, too well

The Ger-
mans ig-
norant of
letters;

* His work, entitled *Atlantica*, is uncommonly scarce. Bayle has given two most curious extracts from it. *Republique des Lettres Janvier et Fevrier, 1685,*

CHAP. attested to admit of any doubt, and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any reply. The Germans, in the age of Tacitus, were unacquainted with the use of letters;^a and the use of letters is the principal circumstance that distinguishes a civilized people from a herd of savages incapable of knowledge or reflection. Without that artificial help, the human memory soon dissipates or corrupts the ideas intrusted to her charge; and the nobler faculties of the mind, no longer supplied with models or with materials, gradually forget their powers; the judgment becomes feeble and lethargic, the imagination languid or irregular. Fully to apprehend this important truth, let us attempt, in an improved society, to calculate the immense distance between the man of learning and the *illiterate* peasant. The former, by reading and reflection, multiplies his own experience, and lives in distant ages and remote countries; whilst the latter, rooted to a single spot, and confined to a few years of existence, surpasses, but very little, his fellow-

^a Tacit. Germ. ii, 19. Literarum secreta viri pariter ac femine ignorant. We may rest contented with this decisive authority, without entering into the obscure disputes concerning the antiquity of the Runic characters. The learned Celsius, a Swede, a scholar, and a philosopher, was of opinion, that they were nothing more than the Roman letters, with the curves changed into straight lines for the ease of engraving. See Pelloutier, Histoire des Celtes, l. ii. c. 11. Dictionnaire Diplomatique, tom. i, p. 223. We may add, that the oldest Runic inscriptions are supposed to be of the third century, and the most ancient writer who mentions the Runic characters is Venantius Fortunatus (Carm. vii, 18), who lived towards the end of the sixth century.

Barbara fraxineis pingatur Runa tabellis.

labourer the ox in the field, and his mental difficulties. The same may be said of the other, difference will be found in the degree of their mental difficulties, and in the number of individuals who are possessed of them. There is no country without some individuals who are possessed of them, and there is no country which has not made some progress in the arts of agriculture; but there is no country which has ever possessed the faithful annals of their history, or ever made any considerable progress in the arts of agriculture, or ever approached in any tolerable degree of perfection, the useful and dignified arts of life.

Of these arts, the ancient Germans were wretchedly deficient. They passed their time in a state of ignorance and poverty, which it has pleased some declaimers to dignify with the appellation of virtuous simplicity. Modern Germany is said to contain about two thousand three hundred walled towns.¹ In a much wider extent of country, the geographer Ptolemy could discover no more than ninety places, which he decorates with the name of cities; though, according to our ideas, they might well deserve that splendid title. We can only suppose that they had been mere fortifications, constructed in the centre of the woods, and designed to secure the women, children, and cattle, whilst the warriors of the tribe marched out to repel a sudden invasion.²

¹ *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Américains*, tom. ii. p. 220. The author of that very curious work is, if I am not mistaken, a German by birth.

² The Alexandrian geographer is often criticised by the accurate Cluverius.

³ See Caesar, and the learned Mr. Whitaker, in his History of Manchester, vol. i.

CHAP. But Tacitus asserts, as a well-known fact, that
 IX. the Germans, in his time, had no cities;¹ and
 that they affected to despise the works of Roman
 industry, as places of confinement rather than of
 security.² Their edifices were not even conti-
 guous, or formed into regular villas;³ each bar-
 barbarian fixed his independent dwelling on the spot
 to which a plain, a wood, or a stream of fresh
 water, had induced him to give the preference.
 Neither stone, nor brick, nor tiles, were em-
 ployed in these slight habitations.⁴ They were
 indeed no more than low huts of a circular figure,
 built of rough timber, thatched with straw, and
 pierced at the top to leave a free passage for the
 smoke. In the most inclement winter, the
 hardy German was satisfied with a scanty garment
 made of the skin of some animal. The nations
 who dwelt towards the north, clothed themselves
 in furs; and the women manufactured for their
 own use a coarse kind of linen.⁵ The game of
 various sorts, with which the forests of Germany
 were plentifully stocked, supplied its inhabitants

¹ Tacit. Germ. 15.

² When the Germans commanded the Ubii of Cologne to cast off
 the Roman yoke, and with their new freedom to resume their ancient
 manners, they insisted on the immediate demolition of the walls of
 the colony. "Postulamus a vobis, muros coloniae, munimenta
 " vitii detrahatis; etiam fera animalia, si clausa teneant, virtutis
 " obliviscuntur." Tacit. Hist. iv, 64.

³ The straggling villages of Silesia are several miles in length.
 See Cluver. l. i. c. 13.

⁴ One hundred and forty years after Tacitus, a few more regular
 structures were erected near the Rhine and Danube. Herodian,
 l. viii, p. 234.

⁵ Tacit. Germ. 17.

with food and exercise.^b Their monstrous herds of cattle, less remarkable indeed for their beauty than for their utility,^c formed the principal object of their wealth. A small quantity of corn was the only produce exacted from the earth; the use of orchards or artificial meadows was unknown to the Germans; nor can we expect any improvements in agriculture from a people, whose property every year experienced a general change by a new division of the arable lands, and who, in that strange operation, avoided disputes, by suffering a great part of their territory to lie waste and without tillage.^d

Gold, silver, and iron, were extremely scarce in Germany. Its barbarous inhabitants wanted both skill and patience to investigate those rich veins of silver, which have so liberally rewarded the attention of the princes of Brunswick and Saxony. Sweden, which now supplies Europe with iron, was equally ignorant of its own riches; and the appearance of the arms of the Germans furnished a sufficient proof how little iron they were able to bestow on what they must have deemed the noblest use of that metal. The various transactions of peace and war had introduced some Roman coins (chiefly silver) among the borderers of the Rhine and Danube; but the more distant tribes were absolutely unacquainted with the use of money, carried on their confined traffic by the exchange of commodities, and

^b Tacit. Germ. 5.

^c Cæsar. de Bell. Gall. vi, 21.

^d Tacit. Germ. 26. Cæsar, vi, 22.

CHAR. IX. prized their rude earthen vessels as of equal value with the silver vases, the presents of Rome to their princes and ambassadors.^{*} To a mind capable of reflection, such leading facts convey more instruction, than a tedious detail of subordinate circumstances. The value of money has been settled by general consent to express our wants and our property, as letters were invented to express our ideas; and both these institutions, by giving a more active energy to the powers and passions of human nature, have contributed to multiply the objects they were designed to represent. The use of gold and silver is in a great measure factitious; but it would be impossible to enumerate the important and various services which agriculture, and all the arts, have received from iron, when tempered and fashioned by the operation of fire, and the dexterous hand of man. Money, in a word, is the most universal incitement, the most powerful instrument, of human industry; and it is very difficult to conceive by what means a people, neither actuated by the one, nor seconded by the other, could emerge from the grossest barbarism.[†]

Their indolence.

If we contemplate a savage nation in any part of the globe, a supine indolence and a carelessness of futurity will be found to constitute their general character. In a civilized state, every faculty

* Tacit. Germ. 6.

† It is said that the Mexicans and Peruvians, without the use of either money or iron, had made a very great progress in the arts. Those arts, and the monuments they produced, have been strangely magnified. See Recherches sur les Americains, tom. ii, p. 153, &c.

of man is expanded and exercised, and the great CHAP.
 chain of mutual dependence connects and embraces the several members of society. The most numerous portion of it is employed in constant and useful labour. The select few, whose fortune allows that necessity, can, however, fill up their time by the pursuits of interest or glory, by the improvement of their estate or of their understanding, by the duties, the pleasures, and even the follies of social life. The Germans were not possessed of these varied resources. The care of the house and family, the management of the land and cattle, were delegated to the old and the infirm, to women and slaves. The lazy warrior, destitute of every art that might employ his leisure hours, consumed his days and nights in the animal gratifications of sleep and food. And yet, by a wonderful diversity of nature (according to the remark of a writer who had pierced into its darkest recesses), the same barbarians are by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind. They detest sloth; they detest tranquillity.^{*} The languid soul, oppressed with its own weight, anxiously required some new and powerful sensation; and war and danger were the only amusements adequate to its fierce temper. The sound that summoned the German to arms was grateful to his ear. It roused him from his uncomfortable lethargy, gave him an active pursuit, and, by strong exercise of the body, and violent emotions of the mind, restored him to a

* Tacit. Germ. 15.

CHAP. more lively sense of his existence. In the dull
 IX. intervals of peace, these barbarians were immoderately addicted to deep gaming and excessive drinking; both of which, by different means, the one by inflaming their passions, the other by extinguishing their reason, alike relieved them from the pain of thinking. They gloried in passing whole days and nights at table; and the blood of friends and relations often stained their numerous and drunken assemblies.^a Their debts of honour (for in that light they have transmitted to us those of play) they discharged with the most romantic fidelity. The desperate gamester, who had staked his person and liberty on a last throw of the dice, patiently submitted to the decision of fortune, and suffered himself to be bound, chastised, and sold into remote slavery, by his weaker but more lucky antagonist.

Their taste
for strong,
liquors.

Strong beer, a liquor extracted with very little art from wheat or barley, and corrupted (as it is strongly expressed by Tacitus) into a certain semblance of wine, was sufficient for the gross purposes of German debauchery. But those who had tasted the rich wines of Italy, and afterwards of Gaul, sighed for that more delicious species of intoxication. They attempted not, however (as has since been executed with so much success), to naturalize the vine on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; nor did they endeavour to procure

^a Tacit. Germ. 22, 23.

^b Id. 24. The Germans might borrow the arts of play from the Romans, but the *passion* is wonderfully inherent in the human species.

by industry the materials of an advantageous commerce. To solicit by labour what might be ravished by arms, was esteemed unworthy of the German spirit.¹ The intemperate thirst of strong liquors often urged the barbarians to invade the provinces which art or nature had bestowed those much envied presents. The Tuscan who betrayed his country to the Celtic nations, attracted them into Italy by the prospect of rich fruits and delicious wines, the productions of a happier climate.² And in the same manner the German auxiliaries invited into France during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, were allured by the promise of plenteous quarters in the provinces of Champaigne and Burgundy.³ Drunkenness, the most illiberal, but not the most dangerous of our vices, was sometimes capable, in a less civilized state of mankind, of occasioning a battle, a war, or a revolution.

The climate of ancient Germany has been mol-^{State of}
lified, and the soil fertilized, by the labour of population.
ten centuries from the time of Charlemagne. The same extent of ground which at present maintains, in ease and plenty, a million of husbandmen and artificers, was unable to supply an hundred thousand ~~they~~ warriors with the simple necessities of life.⁴ The Germans abandoned their

¹ Tacit. Germ. 14.

² Plutarch. in Camillo. T. LIV. v. 33.

³ Dubos. Hist. de la Monarchie Française, tom. i, p. 195.

⁴ The Helvetian nation, which issued from the country called Switzerland, contained, of every age and sex, 368,000 persons
(Caesar

CHAP. immense forests to the exercise of hunting, employed in pasturage the most considerable part of IX. their lands, bestowed on the small remainder a rude and careless cultivation, and then accused the scantiness and sterility of a country that refused to maintain the multitude of its inhabitants. When the return of famine severely admonished them of the importance of the arts, the national distress was sometimes alleviated by the emigration of a third, perhaps, or a fourth part of their youth.^{*} The possession and the enjoyment of property are the pledges which bind a civilized people to an improved country. But the Germans, who carried with them what they most valued, their arms, their cattle, and their women, cheerfully abandoned the vast silence of their woods for the unbounded hopes of plunder and conquest. The innumerable swarms that issued, or seemed to issue, from the great storehouse of nations, were multiplied by the fears of the vanquished, and by the credulity of succeeding ages. And from facts thus exaggerated, an opinion was gradually established, and has been supported by writers of distinguished reputation, that in the age of Caesar and Tacitus, the inhabitants of the north were far more numerous than they are in

(Caesar de Bell. Gall. i, 29). At present, the number of people in the Pays de Vaud (a small district on the banks of the Leman lake, much more distinguished for politeness than for industry) amounts to 112,591. See an excellent tract of M. Muret, in the Mémoires de la Société de Bern.

* Paul Diaconus, c. 1, 2, 3, Medieval, Davis, and the rest of Paul's followers, represent these emigrations too much as regular and concerted measures.

our days.^p A more serious inquiry into the causes of population seems to have convinced modern philosophers of the falsehood, and indeed the impossibility, of the supposition. To the names of Mariana and of Machiavel,^q we can oppose the equal names of Robertson and Hume.^r

A warlike nation like the Germans, without either cities, letters, arts, or money, found some compensation for this savage state in the enjoyment of liberty. Their poverty secured their freedom, since our desires and our possessions are the strongest ~~setters~~^{German freedom.} of despotism. “ Among the Suiones (says Tacitus), riches are held in honour. They are therefore subject to an absolute monarch, who, instead of entrusting his people with the free use of arms, as is practised in the rest of Germany, commits them to the safe custody, not of a citizen, or even of a freed man, but of a slave. The neighbours of the Suiones, the Sitones, are sunk even below servitude; they obey a woman.” In the mention of these exceptions, the great historian sufficiently acknowledges the general theory of government. We are only at a loss to conceive by what means riches and despotism could pene-

^p Sir William Temple and Montesquieu have indulged, on this subject, the usual liveliness of their fancy.

^q Machiavel Hist. de Firenze, l. i. Mariana Hist. Hispan. l. v. c. I.

^r Robertson's Charles V. Hume's Political Essays.

^s Tacit. German. 44, 45. Frenshemius (who dedicated his supplement to Livy, to Christina of Sweden) thinks proper to be very angry with the Romans who expressed so very little reverence for northern queens.

CHAP. trate into a remote corner of the north, and
 IX. extinguish the generous flame that blazed with such fierceness on the frontier of the Roman provinces; or how the ancestors of those Danes and Norwegians, so distinguished in latter ages by their unconquered spirit, could thus tamely resign the great character of German liberty.^t Some tribes, however, on the coast of the Baltic, acknowledged the authority of kings, though without relinquishing the rights of men;^u but in the far greater part of Germany, the form of government was a democracy, tempered indeed, and controuled, not so much by general and positive laws, as by the occasional ascendant of birth or valour, of eloquence or superstition.^x

Assemblies of the people. Civil governments, in their first institutions, are voluntary associations for mutual defence. To obtain the desired end, it is absolutely necessary that each individual should conceive himself obliged to submit his private opinion and actions to the judgment of the greater number of his associates. The German tribes were contented with this rude, but liberal, outline of political society. As soon as a youth, born of free parents, had attained the age of manhood, he was intro-

^t May we not suspect that superstition was the parent of despotism? The descendants of Odin (whose race was not extinct till the year 1060) are said to have reigned in Sweden above a thousand years. The temple of Upsal was the ancient seat of religion and empire. In the year 1153, I find a singular law, prohibiting the use and possession of arms to any except the king's guards. Is it not probable that it was coloured by the pretence of reviving an old institution? See Dallin's History of Sweden, in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée, tom. xi and xlv.

^u Tacit. Germ. c. 43.

^x Id. c. 11, 12, 13, &c.

duced into the general council of his country-^{CHAR-}
men, solemnly invested with a shield and spear,
^{IX.}
and adopted as an equal and worthy member of
the military commonwealth. The assembly of
the warriors of the tribe was convened at stated
seasons, or at sudden emergencies. The trial
of public offences, the election of magistrates,
and the great business of peace and war, were
determined by its independent voice. Some-
times, indeed, these important questions were
previously considered, and prepared in a more
select council of the principal chieftains.² The
magistrates might deliberate and persuade, the
people only could resolve and execute; and the
resolutions of the Germans were for the most
part hasty and violent. Barbarians accustomed
to place their freedom in gratifying the present
passion, and their courage in overlooking all
future consequences, turned away with indig-
nant contempt from the remonstrances of justice
and policy, and it was the practice to signify by
a hollow murmur their dislike of such timid
counsel. But whenever a more popular orator
proposed to vindicate the meanest citizen from
either foreign or domestic injury, whenever he
called upon his fellow countrymen to assert the
national honour, or to pursue some enterprise
full of danger and glory, a loud clashing of
shields and spears expressed the eager applause
of the assembly. For the Germans always met

² Grotius changes an expression of Tacitus, *pertractantur* into
protractantur. The correction is equally just and ingenious.

CHAP. in arms, and it was constantly to be dreaded,
 IX. lest an irregular multitude, inflamed with faction and strong liquors, should use those arms to enforce, as well as to declare, their furious resolves. We may recollect how often the diets of Poland have been polluted with blood, and the more numerous party has been compelled to yield to the more violent and seditious.*

Authority
of the
princes
and magis-
trates

A general of the tribe was elected on occasions of danger; and, if the danger was pressing and extensive, several tribes concurred in the choice of the same general. The bravest warrior was named to lead his countrymen into the field, by his example rather than by his commands. But this power, however limited, was still invi- dious. It expired with the war, and in time of peace the German tribes acknowledged not any supreme chief.^a Princes were, however, ap- pointed in the general assembly, to administer justice, or rather, to compose differences, in their respective districts. In the choice of these magistrates, as much regard was shewn to birth as to merit.^b To each was assigned, by the public, a guard, and a council of an hundred persons; and the first of the princes appears to have enjoyed a pre-eminence of rank and honour.

* Even in our ancient parliament, the barons often carried a question, not so much by the number of votes, as by that of their armed followers.

^a Caesar de Bell. Gall. vi, 23.

^b Minunt controversias, is a very happy expression of Caesar's

^c Reger ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. Tinct. Germ. 6.

which sometimes tempted the Romans to compliment him with the regal title.⁴

The comparative view of the powers of the magistrates, in two remarkable instances, is alone sufficient to represent the whole system of German manners. The disposal of the landed property within their district was absolutely vested in their hands, and they distributed it every year according to a new division.* At the same time they were not authorised to punish with death, to imprison, or even to strike, a private citizen. A people thus jealous of their persons, and careless of their possessions, must have been totally destitute of industry and the arts, but animated with a high sense of honour and independence.

The Germans respected only those duties which they imposed on themselves. The most obscure soldier resisted with disdain the authority of the magistrates. “The noblest youths blushed not to be numbered among the faithful companions of some renowned chief, to whom they devoted their arms and service. A noble emulation prevailed among the companions, to obtain the first place in the esteem of their chief; amongst the chiefs, to acquire the greatest number of valiant companions. To be ever surrounded by a band of select youths, was the pride and strength of the chiefs, their ornament in peace, their defence

* Cluver. Germ. Ant. I. i, c. 38.

• Caesar, vi, 22. Tacit. Germ. 26.

† Tacit. Germ. 7.

CHAP. " in war. The glory of such distinguished
IX. " heroes diffused itself beyond the narrow limits
" of their own tribe. Presents and embassies
" solicited their friendship, and the fame of
" their arms often ensured victory to the party
" which they espoused. In the hour of danger
" it was shameful for the chief to be surpassed
" in valour by his companions; shameful for the
" companions not to equal the valour of their
" chief. To survive his fall in battle, was in-
" delible infamy. To protect his person, and to
" adorn his glory with the trophies of their own
" exploits, were the most sacred of their duties.
" The chiefs combated for victory, the compa-
" nions for the chief. The noblest warriors,
" whenever their native country was sunk in the
" laziness of peace, maintained their numerous
" bands in some distant scene of action, to ex-
" ercise their restless spirit, and to acquire
" voluntary dangers. Gifts worthy of
" soldiers, the warlike steed, the bloody and
" ever victorious lance, were the rewards which
" the companions claimed from the liberality of
" their chief. The rude plenty of his hospitable
" board was the only pay that he could bestow;
" or they would accept. War, rapine, and the
" freewill offerings of his friends, supplied the
" materials of this munificence." This institu-
" tion, however it might accidentally weaken the
several republics, invigorated the general charac-
ter of the Germans, and even ripened amongst

them all the virtues of which barbarians are susceptible; the faith and valour, the hospitality and the courtesy, so conspicuous long afterwards in the ages of chivalry.¹ The honourable gifts, bestowed by the chief on his brave companions, have been supposed, by an ingenious writer, to contain the first rudiments of the fiefs, distributed, after the conquest of the Roman provinces, by the barbarian lords among their vassals, with a similar duty of homage and military service.² These conditions are, however, very repugnant to the maxims of the ancient Germans, who delighted in mutual presents; but without either imposing, or accepting, the weight of obligations.³

"In the days of chivalry, or more properly German chastity,
 "of romance, all the men were brave, and all
 "the women were chaste;" and notwithstanding the latter of these virtues is acquired and preserved with much more difficulty than the former, it is ascribed almost without exception, to the wives of the ancient Germans. Polygamy was not in use, except among the priests, and among them only for the sake of multiplying their alliances. Divorces were prohibited by manners rather than by laws. Adulteries were punished as rare and inexpiable crimes; nor

¹ *Esprit des Loix*, I. xxx, c. 3. The brilliant imagination of Montesquieu is corrected, however, by the dry cold reason of the Abbé de Mably. *Observations sur l'Histoire de France*, tom. i, p. 286.

² *Gaudent muneribus, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur.* Tacit. Germ. c. 21.

CHAP. ~~were~~ seduction justified by example and fashion.¹

IX. We may easily discover, that Tacitus indulges an honest pleasure in the contrast of barbarian virtue with the dissolute conduct of the Roman ladies; yet there are some striking circumstances that give an air of truth, or at least of probability, to the conjugal faith and chastity of the Germans.

Its probable causes.

Although the progress of civilization has undoubtedly contributed to increase the fiercer passions of human nature, it seems to have been less favourable to the virtue of chastity, whose most dangerous enemy is the softness of the mind. The refinements of life corrupt while they polish the intercourse of the sexes. The gross appetite of love becomes most dangerous when it is elevated, or rather, indeed, disguised by sentimental passion. The elegance of dress, of motion, and of manners gives opportunity and induces temptation through the imagination. Luxurious amusements, midnight dances, and sumptuous spectacles, present at once temptation and opportunity to female frailty.² From which dangers the unpolished wives of the barbarians are secured by poverty, solitude, and the painful cares of a domestic life. The German huts open, ~~on every side~~, to the eye of ~~the~~ husband

¹ The adulteress was whipped through the village. Neither wealth nor beauty could inspire compassion, or procure her a second husband. 18, 19.

² Ovid employs two hundred lines in the research of pleasure, most favourable to love. Above all, he considers the theatre as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome, and to melt them into tenderness and sensuality.

jealousy, were a better safeguard of conjugal fidelity, than the walls, the bolts, and the eunuchs of a Persian haram. To this reason, another may be added, of a more honourable nature. The Germans treated their women with esteem and confidence, consulted them on every occasion of importance, and fondly believed, that in their breasts resided a sanctity and wisdom more than human. Some of these interpreters of fate, such as Velleda, in the Batavian war, governed, in the name of the deity, the fiercest nations of Germany.^m The rest of the sex, without being adored as goddesses, were respected as the free and equal companions of soldiers; associated, even by the marriage ceremony, to a life of toil, of danger, and of glory.ⁿ In their great invasions, the camps of the barbarians were filled with a multitude of women, who remained firm and undaunted amidst the sound of arms, the various forms of destruction, and the honourable wounds of their sons and husbands.^o Fainting armies of Germans have more than once been driven back upon the enemy, by the generous despair of the women, who dreaded death much less than servitude. If the day was irrecoverably lost, they well knew how to deliver themselves and their children, with their own hands, from

^m Tacit. Annal. iv, 61, 65.

ⁿ The marriage present was a yoke of oxen, horses, and arms. See Germ. c. 18. Tacit is somewhat too florid on the subject.

^o The change of *exigere* into *exugere* is a most excellent correction.

CHAP. an insulting victor.^p Heroines of such a cast
 IX. may claim our admiration ; but they were most assuredly neither lovely, nor very susceptible of love. Whilst they affected to emulate the stern virtues of *man*, they must have resigned that attractive softness in which principally consists the charm and weakness of *woman*. Conscious pride taught the German females to suppress every tender emotion that stood in competition with honour, and the first honour of the sex has ever been that of chastity. The sentiments and conduct of these high-spirited matrons may, at once, be considered as a cause, as an effect, and as a proof of the general character of the nation. Female courage, however it may be raised by fanaticism, or confirmed by habit, can be only a faint and imperfect imitation of the manly valour that distinguishes the age or country in which it may be found.

Religion.

The religious system of the Germans (if the wild opinions of savages can deserve that name) was dictated by their wants, their fears, and their ignorance.^q They adored the great visible objects and agents of nature, the sun and the

^p Tacit. Germ. c. 7. Plutarch. in Mario. Before the wives of the Teutones destroyed themselves and their children, they had offered to surrender, on condition that they should be received as the slaves of the vestal virgins.

^q Tacitus has employed a few lines, and Cluverius one hundred and twenty-four pages, on this obscure subject. The former discovers in Germany the gods of Greece and Rome. The latter is positive, that under the emblems of the sun, the moon, and the fire, his pious ancestors worshipped the Trinity in unity.

moon, the fire and the earth; together with those imaginary deities, who were supposed to preside over the most important occupations of human life. They were persuaded, that, by some ridiculous arts of divination, they could discover the will of the superior beings, and that human sacrifices were the most precious and acceptable offering to their altars. Some applause has been hastily bestowed on the sublime notion, entertained by that people, of the Deity, whom they neither confined within the walls of a temple, nor represented by any human figure; but when we recollect, that the Germans were unskilled in architecture, and totally unacquainted with the art of sculpture, we shall readily assign the true reason of a scruple, which arose not so much from a superiority of reason, as from a want of ingenuity. The only temples in Germany were dark and ancient groves, consecrated by the reverence of succeeding generations. Their secret gloom, the imagined residence of an invisible power, by presenting no distinct object of fear or worship, impressed the mind with a still deeper sense of religious horror; and the priests, rude and illiterate as they were, had been taught by experience the use of every artifice that could preserve and fortify impressions so well suited to their own interest.

* The sacred wood, described with such sublime horror by Lucan, was in the neighbourhood of Marseilles; but there were many of the same kind in Germany.

CHAP.

IX.

Its effects
in peace;

The same ignorance which renders barbarians incapable of conceiving or embracing the useful restraints of laws, exposes them naked and unarmed to the blind terrors of superstition. The German priests, improving this favourable temper of their countrymen, had assumed a jurisdiction, even in temporal concerns, which the magistrate could not venture to exercise; and the haughty warrior patiently submitted to the lash of correction, when it was inflicted, not by any human power, but by the immediate order of the god of war.¹ The defects of civil policy were sometimes supplied by the interposition of ecclesiastical authority. The latter was constantly exerted to maintain silence and decency in the popular assemblies; and was sometimes extended to a more enlarged concern for the national welfare. A solemn procession was occasionally celebrated in the present countries of Mecklenburgh and Pomerania. The unknown symbol of the *earth*, covered with a thick veil, was placed on a carriage drawn by cows; and in this manner the goddess, whose common residence was in the isle of Rugen, visited several adjacent tribes of her worshippers. During her progress, the sound of war was hushed, quarrels were suspended, arms laid aside, and the restless Germans had an opportunity of tasting the blessings of peace and harmony.² The *truce of God*, so often and so ineffectually proclaimed by the

• Tacit. Germania, c. 7.

† Tacit. Germania, c. 40.

clergy of the eleventh century, was an obvious imitation of this ancient custom.¹

But the influence of religion was far more powerful to inflame, than to moderate, the fierce passions of the Germans. Interest and fanaticism often prompted its ministers to sanctify the most daring and the most unjust enterprises, by the approbation of heaven, and full assurances of success. The consecrated standards, long revered in the groves of superstition, were placed in the front of the battle;² and the hostile army was devoted with dire execrations to the gods of war and of thunder.³ In the faith of soldiers (and such were the Germans) cowardice is the most unpardonable of sins. A brave man was the worthy favorite of their martial deities; the wretch who had lost his shield, was alike banished from the religious and the civil assemblies of his countrymen. Some tribes of the north seem to have embraced the doctrine of transmigration;⁴ others imagined a gross paradise of immortal drunkenness.⁵ All agreed, that a life spent in arms, and a glorious death in battle, were the best preparations for a happy futurity, either in this or in another world.

¹ See Dr. Robertson's History of Charles V., vol. i., note 10.

² Tacit. Germ. c. 7. These standards were only the heads of wild beasts.

³ See an instance of this custom, Tacit. Annal. xiii, 57.

⁴ Caesar, Diodorus, and Lucan, seem to ascribe this doctrine to the Gauls; but M. Pelloutier (Histoire des Celtes, I. iii, &c. 18), labours to reduce their expressions to a more orthodox sense.

⁵ Concerning this gross but alluring doctrine of the Edda, see table xx, in the curious version of that book, published by M. Mallet, in his Introduction to the History of Denmark,

CHAP. IX. The immortality so vainly promised by the priests, was in some degree conferred by the bards. That singular order of men has most deservedly attracted the notice of all who have attempted to investigate the antiquities of the Celts, the Scandinavians, and the Germans. Their genius and character, as well as the reverence paid to that important office, have been sufficiently illustrated. But we cannot so easily express, or even conceive, the enthusiasm of arms and glory which they kindled in the breast of their audience. Among a polished people, a taste for poetry is rather an amusement of the fancy, than a passion of the soul. And yet, when in calm retirement we peruse the combats described by Homer or Tasso, we are insensibly seduced by the fiction, and feel a momentary glow of martial ardour. But how faint, how cold is the sensation which a peaceful mind can receive from solitary study! It was in the hour of battle, in the feast of victory, that the bards celebrated the glory of heroes of ancient days, the ancestors of those warlike chieftains who listened with transport to their artless but animated strains. The view of arms and of danger heightened the effect of the military song; and the passions which it tended to excite, the desire of fame, and the contempt of death, were the habitual sentiments of a German mind.^b

^b See Tacit. Germ. c. 3. Diodor. Sicul. l. v. Strabo, l. iv, p. 197. The classical reader may remember the rank of Demodocus in the Phaeacian

Such was the situation, and such were the manners, of the ancient Germans. Their climate, their want of learning, of arts, and of laws, their notions of honour, of gallantry, and of religion, their sense of freedom, impatience of peace, and thirst of enterprise, all contributed to form a people of military heroes. And yet we find, that during more than two hundred and fifty years that elapsed from the defeat of Varus to the reign of Decius, these formidable barbarians made few considerable attempts, and not any material impression, on the luxurious and enslaved provinces of the empire. Their progress was checked by their want of arms and discipline, and their fury was diverted by the intestine divisions of ancient Germany.

i. It has been observed, with ingenuity, and ^{Want of} arms not without truth, that the command of iron soon gives a nation the command of gold. But the rude tribes of Germany, alike destitute of both those valuable metals, were reduced slowly to acquire, by their unassisted strength, the possession of the one, as well as the other. The force of German army displayed their poverty of iron. Swords, and the longer kind of lances, they could seldom use. Their *frameæ* (as they called them in their own language) were long spears, headed with a sharp but narrow iron point,

Phœcian court, and the ardour infused by Pyrrhus into the fainting Spartans. Yet there is little probability that the Greeks and the Germans were the same people. Much learned trifling might be spared, if our antiquarians would condescend to reflect, that similar manners will naturally be produced by similar situations.

C H A P.
IX.

and which, as occasion required, they either darted from a distance, or pushed in close onset. With this spear, and with a shield, their cavalry was contented. A multitude of darts, scattered with incredible force, were an additional resource of the infantry. Their military dress, when they wore any, was nothing more than a loose mantle. A variety of colours was the only ornament of their wooden or osier shields. Few of the chiefs were distinguished by cuirasses, scarce any by helmets. Though the horses of Germany were neither beautiful, swift, nor practised in the skilful evolutions of the Roman manege, several of the nations obtained renown by their cavalry; but, in general, the principal strength of the Germans consisted in their infantry,^a which was drawn up in several deep columns, according to the distinction of tribes and families. Impatient of fatigue or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts, and disordered ranks; and sometimes, by the effort of native valour, prevailed over the constrained and more artificial bravery of the Roman mercenaries. But as the barbarians poured forth their whole souls on the first onset, they knew not how to rally, or to retire. A repulse was a sure defeat; and a defeat was most commonly total destruction. When we

* Missilia spargunt. Tacit. Germ. c. 6. Either that historian used a vague expression, or he meant that they were thrown at random.

^a It was their principal distinction from the Sarmatians, who generally fought on horseback.

recollect the complete armour of the Roman soldiers, their discipline, exercises, evolutions, fortified camps, and military engines; it appears a just matter of surprise, how the naked and unassisted valour of the barbarians could dare to encounter in the field the strength of the legions, and the various troops of the auxiliaries, which seconded their operations. The contest was too unequal, till the introduction of luxury had enervated the vigour, and a spirit of disobedience and sedition had relaxed the discipline, of the Roman armies. ~~The introduction~~^{IX.} of barbarian auxiliaries into those armies, was a measure attended with very obvious dangers, as it might gradually instruct the Germans in the arts of war and of policy. Although they were admitted in small numbers, and with the strictest precaution, the example of Civilis was proper to convince the Romans, that the danger was not imaginary, and that their precautions were not always sufficient. During the civil wars that followed the death of Nero, that artful and impudent Batavian, whom his enemies condescended to compare with Hannibal and Sertorius, formed a great design of freedom and ambition. Eight Batavian cohorts, renowned in the wars of Britain and Italy, repaired to his standard. He introduced an army of Germans into Gaul, prevailed

² The relation of this enterprise occupies a great part of the fourth and fifth books of the History of Tacitus, and is more remarkable for its eloquence than perspicuity. Sir Henry Savile has observed several inaccuracies.

³ Tacit. Hist. iv, 13. Like them he had lost an eye.

CHAP. on the powerful cities of Treves and Langres to
 IX. embrace his cause, defeated the legions, destroyed
 their fortified camps, and employed against the
 Romans the military knowledge which he had
 acquired in their service. When at length, after
 an obstinate struggle, he yielded to the power of
 the empire, Civilis secured himself and his coun-
 try by an honourable treaty. The Batavians still
 continued to occupy the islands of the Rhine,^{*}
 the allies, not the servants, of the Roman mo-
 narchy.

Civil dis-
 sentions of
 Germany

ii. The strength of ancient Germany appears
 formidable, when we consider the effects that
 might have been produced by its united effort.
 The wide extent of country might very possibly
 contain a million of warriors, as all who were of
 age to bear arms were of a temper to use them.
 But this fierce multitude, incapable of concert-
 ing or executing any plan of national greatness,
 was agitated by various and often hostile inten-
 tions. Germany was divided into more than
 forty independent states; and, even in each state,
 the union of the several tribes was extremely
 loose and precarious. The barbarians were easily
 provoked; they knew not how to forgive an in-
 jury, much less an insult; their resentments were
 bloody and implacable. The casual disputes that
 so frequently happened in their tumultuous par-
 ties of hunting or drinking, were sufficient to

* It was contained between the two branches of the old Rhine, as
 they subsisted before the face of the country was changed by art and
 nature. See Cluver. German. Antiq. I. iii, c. 30, 37.

inflame the minds of whole nations; the private CHAP.
 feud of any considerable chieftains diffused itself IX.
 among their followers and allies. To chastise
 the insolent, or to plunder the defenceless, were
 alike causes of war. The most formidable states
 of Germany affected to encompass their terri-
 tories with a wide frontier of solitude and de-
 vastation. The awful distance preserved by their
 neighbours, attested the terror of their arms,
 and in some measure defended them from the
 danger of unexpected incursions.^h

“ The ~~Baxteri~~ (^{It is Tacitus who now speaks}) fomented
 “ were totally exterminated by the neighbouring by the po-
 “ tribes, provoked by their insolence, allured licy of
 “ by the hopes of spoil, and perhaps inspired by Rome.
 “ the tutelar deities of the empire. Above sixty
 “ thousand barbarians were destroyed; not by
 “ the Roman arms, but in our sight, and for
 “ our entertainment. May the nations, enemies
 “ of Rome, ever preserve this enmity to each
 “ other! We have now attained the utmost
 “ verge of prosperity, and have nothing left
 “ to demand of fortune, except the discord of
 “ these barbarians.” These sentiments, less

^a Caesar de Bell. Gall. vi, 23.

^b They are mentioned, however, in the fourth and fifth centuries, by Nazarius, Ammianus, Clodian, &c. as a tribe of Franks. See Cluver. Germ. Antiq. I. iii, c. 18.

^c *Urgentibus* is the common reading, but good sense, Lipsius, and some MSS. declare for *Vergentibus*.

^d Tacit. Germania, c. 33. The pious Abbé de la Bleterie is very angry with Tacitus, talks of the devil who was a murderer from the beginning, &c. &c.

CHAP. worthy of the humanity than of the patriotism
 IX. of Tacitus, express the invariable maxims of
 the policy of his countrymen. They deemed it
 a much safer expedient to divide than to combat
 the barbarians, from whose defeat they could
 derive neither honour nor^m advantage. The
 money and negotiations of Rome insinuated
 themselves into the heart of Germany; and every
 art of seduction was used with dignity, to con-
 ciliate those nations whom their proximity to
 the Rhine or Danube might render the most
 useful friends, as well as the most troublesome
 enemies. Chiefs of renown and power were
 flattered by the most trifling presents, which they
 received either as marks of distinction, or as the
 instruments of luxury. In civil dissensions, the
 weaker faction endeavoured to strengthen its
 interest by entering into secret connexions with
 the governors of the frontier provinces. Every
 quarrel among the Germans was fomented by
 the intrigues of Rome; and every plan of union
 and public good was defeated by the stronger
 bias of private jealousy and interest.ⁿ

Transient
union
against
Marcus
Antoni-
us.

The general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus comprehended almost all the nations of Germany, and even Sarmatia, from the mouth of the Rhine

^m Many traces of this policy may be discovered in Tacitus and Dion; and many more may be inferred from the principles of human nature.

to that of the Danube.^a It is impossible for us to determine whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity, by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, or provoked by the ambition, of the Roman monarch. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the Upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued. The Quadi and the Marcomanni,^b who had taken the lead in the war, were the most severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles^c from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of the youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages, and useful as soldiers.^d On the frequent rebellions of the Quadi and Marcomanni, the irritated emperor resolved to reduce their country

^a Hist. Aug., p. 31. Ammian. Marcellin. l. xxxi, c. 5. Aurel. Victor. The emperor Marcus was reduced to sell the rich furniture of the palace, and to enlist slaves and robbers.

^b The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had once erected a great and formidable monarchy under their king Marobodius. See Stabo, l. vii. Well. Pat. ii, 105. Tacit. Annal. ii, 63.

^c Mr. Whiston (History of Rome, p. 166) increases the prohibition to ten times the distance. His reasoning is specious, but not conclusive. Five miles were sufficient for a fortified barrier.

^d Dion, l. lxxi and lxxii.

CHAP. into the form of a province. His designs were
IX. disappointed by death. This formidable league, however, the only one that appears in the two first centuries of the imperial history, was entirely dissipated, without leaving any traces behind in Germany.

Distinction of the German tribes. In the course of this introductory chapter, we have confined ourselves to the general outlines of the manners of Germany, without attempting to describe or to distinguish the various tribes which filled that great country in the time of Cæsar, of Tacitus, or of Ptolemy. As the ancient, or as new tribes successively present themselves in the series of this history, we shall concisely mention their origin, their situation, and their particular character. Modern nations are fixed and permanent societies, connected among themselves by laws and government, bound to their native soil by arts and manners. The German tribes were voluntary and fluctuating associations of soldiers, almost of savages. The same territory often changed its inhabitants in the tide of conquest and emigration. The same communities, uniting in a plan of defence or invasion, bestowed a new title on their new confederacy. The dissolution of an ancient confederacy, restored to the independent tribes their peculiar but long forgotten appellation. A victorious state often communicated its own name to a vanquished people. Sometimes crowds of volunteers flock'd from all parts to the standard of a favourite leader; his camp became their country, and some circumstance of the enterprise soon gave a com-

mon denomination to the mixed multitude. The distinctions of the ferocious invaders were perpetually varied by themselves, and confounded by the astonished subjects of the Roman empire.

Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are the principal subjects of history; but the number of persons interested in these busy scenes is very different, according to the different condition of mankind. In great monarchies, millions of obedient subjects pursue their useful occupations in peace and obscurity. The attention of the writer, as well as of the reader, is solely confined to a court, a capital, a regular army, and the districts which happen to be the occasional scene of military operations. But a state of freedom and barbarism, the season of civil commotions, or the situation of petty republics,² raises almost every member of the community into action, and consequently into notice. The irregular divisions, and the restless motions, of the people of Germany, dazzle our imagination, and seem to multiply themselves. The profuse enumeration of kings and warriors, families and nations, inclines us to forget that the same objects are continually repeated under a variety of appellations, and that the most splendid appellations have been frequently lavished on the most inconsiderable objects.

² See an excellent dissertation on the origin and migrations of nations; in the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xviii, p. 48-71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

* Should we suspect that Athens contained only 21,000 citizens, and Sparta no more than 39,000? See Hume and Wallace on the number of mankind in ancient and modern times.

CHAP. X.

The emperors Decius, Gallus, Æmilianus, Valerian, and Gallienus.—The general irruption of the barbarians.—The thirty tyrants.

CHAP.
X.

The nature
of the sub-
ject.

A.D. 248—
268.

FROM the great secular games celebrated by Philip to the death of the emperor Gallienus, there elapsed twenty years of shame and misfortune. During that calamitous period, every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution. The confusion of the times, and the scarcity of authentic memorials, oppose equal difficulties to the historian, who attempts to preserve a clear and unbroken thread of narration. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, he is reduced to collect, to compare, and to conjecture: and though he ought never to place his conjectures in the rank of facts, yet the knowledge of human nature, and of the sure operation of its fierce and unrestrained passions, might, on some occasions, supply the want of historical materials.

The emperor Philip. There is not, for instance, any difficulty conceiving, that the successive murders of so many emperors had loosened all the ties of allegiance between the prince and people; that all

the generals of Philip were disposed to imitate CHAP.
X.
the example of their master; and that the caprice
of armies, long since habituated to frequent and
violent revolutions, might every day raise to the
throne the most obscure of their fellow-soldiers.
History can only add, that the rebellion against
the emperor Philip broke out in the summer of
the year two hundred and forty-nine, among the
legions of Mæsia; and that a subaltern officer
named Marinus, was the object of their seditious
choice. Philip was alarmed. He dreaded lest
the treason of the Mæsian army should prove the
first spark of a general conflagration. Distracted
with the consciousness of his guilt and of his
danger, he communicated the intelligence to the
senate. A gloomy silence prevailed, the effect of
fear, and perhaps of disaffection: till at length Serviees,
Decius, one of the assembly, assuming a spirit
worthy of his noble extraction, ventured to dis-
cover more intrepidity than the emperor seemed
to possess. He treated the whole business with
contempt, as a hasty and ~~inconsiderate~~^{Serviees,} tumult,
and Philip's rival as a phantom of royalty, who
in a very few days would be destroyed by the
same inconstancy that had created him. The
speedy completion of the prophecy inspired Phi-
lip with a just esteem for so able a counsellor;
and Decius appeared to him the only person
capable of restoring peace and discipline to an
army, whose tumultuous spirit did not immedi-

revolt, vic-
tory, and
reign of
the empe-
ror Decius.
A. D. 249.

* The expression used by Zosimus and Zonaras may signify that
Marinus commanded a century, a cohort, or a legion.

CHAP. ately subside after the murder of Marinus. Decius, who long resisted his own nomination, seems to have insinuated the danger of presenting a leader of merit, to the angry and apprehensive minds of the soldiers; and his prediction was again confirmed by the event. The legions of Maesia forced their judge to become their accomplice. They left him only the alternative of death or the purple. His subsequent conduct, after that decisive measure, was unavoidable. He conducted or followed his army to the confines of Italy, whither Philip, collecting all his force to repel the formidable competitor whom he had raised up, advanced to meet him. The imperial troops were superior in number;^b but the rebels formed an army of veterans, commanded by an able and experienced leader. Philip was either killed in the battle, or put to death a few days afterwards at Verona. His son and associate in the empire was massacred at Rome by the prætorian guards; and the victorious Decius, with more favourable circumstances than the ambition of that age can usually plead, was universally acknowledged by the senate and provinces. It is reported, that, immediately after his reluctant acceptance of the title

^b His birth at Bubalia, a little village in Pannonia (Eutrop. ix, Victor in Cæsarib. epitom.), seems to contradict, unless it was merely accidental, his supposed descent from the Decii. Six hundred years had bestowed nobility on the Decii; but at the commencement of that period, they were only plebeians of merit, and among the first who shared the consulship with the haughty patricians. Plebeii Deciorum animæ, &c. Juvenal, Sat. viii, 254. See the spirited speech of Decius, in Livy, x, 9, 10.

of Augustus, he had assured Philip by a private ~~char~~^X message, of his innocence and loyalty, solemnly protesting, that on his arrival in Italy, he would resign the imperial ornaments, and return to the condition of an obedient subject. His professions might be sincere; but in the situation where fortune had placed him, it was scarcely possible that he could either forgive or be forgiven.^{*}

The emperor Decius had employed a few months in the works of peace and the administration of justice, when he was summoned to the banks of the Danube by the invasion of the Goths. This is the first considerable occasion in which history mentions that great people, who afterwards broke the Roman power, sacked the capitol, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. So memorable was the part which they acted in the subversion of the Western empire, that the name of Goths is frequently, but improperly, used as a general appellation of rude and warlike barbarians.

In the beginning of the sixth century, and after the conquest of Italy, the Goths, in possession of present greatness, very naturally indulged themselves in the prospect of past and of future glory. They wished to preserve the memory of their ancestors, and to transmit to posterity their own achievements. The principal minister of the court of Ravenna, the learned Cassiodorus, gratified the inclination of the conquerors in a Gothic history, which consisted of twelve books, now reduced to

* Zosimus, l. i, p. 20. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 624. Edit. Louvre.

CHAP. the imperfect abridgment of Jornandes.^a These writers passed with the most artful conciseness over the misfortunes of the nation, celebrated its successful valour, and adorned the triumph with many Asiatic trophies, that more properly belonged to the people of Scythia. On the faith of ancient songs, the uncertain, but the only memorials of barbarians, they deduced the first origin of the Goths from the vast island, or peninsula, of Scandinavia.^b That extreme country of the north was not unknown to the conquerors of Italy: the ties of ancient consanguinity had been strengthened by recent offices of friendship; and a Scandinavian king had cheerfully abdicated his savage greatness, that he might pass the remainder of his days in the peaceful and polished court of Ravenna.^c Many vestiges, which cannot be ascribed to the arts of popular vanity, attest the ancient residence of the Goths in the countries beyond the Baltic. From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into east and west Gothland. During the middle ages (from the ninth to the twelfth century), whilst Christianity was advancing with a slow progress into the north, the Goths and the Swedes com-

^a See the prefaces of Cassiodorus and Jornandes. It is surprising that the latter should be omitted in the excellent edition published by Grotius, of the Gothic writers.

^b On the authority of Ablavius, Jornandes quotes some old Gothic chronicles in verse. De Reb. Geticis, c. 4.

^c Jornandes, c. 3.

posed two distinct and sometimes hostile members of the same monarchy.* The latter of these two names has prevailed without extinguishing the former. The Swedes, who might well be satisfied with their own fame in arms, have in every age claimed the kindred glory of the Goths. In a moment of discontent against the court of Rome, Charles the Twelfth insinuated, that his victorious troops were not degenerated from their brave ancestors, who had already subdued the mistress of the world.^b

Till the end of the eleventh century, a celebrated temple subsisted at Upsal, the most considerable town of the Swedes and Goths. It was enriched with the gold which the Scandinavians had acquired in their piratical adventures, and sanctified by the uncouth representations of the three principal deities, the god of war, the goddess of generation, and the god of thunder. In the general festival, that was solemnized every ninth year, nine animals of every species (without excepting the human) were sacrificed, and their bleeding bodies suspended in the sacred grove adjacent to the temple.^c The only traces

* See in the *Prolegomena* of Grotius some large extracts from Adam of Bremen, and *Saxo-Grammaticus*. The former wrote in the year 1077, the latter flourished about the year 1200.

^a Voltaire, *Histoire de Charles XII*, I. iii. When the *Austrians* desired the aid of the court of Rome against Gustavus Adolphus, they always represented that conqueror as the lineal successor of Alaric. *Harte's History of Gustavus*, vol. ii, p. 123.

^b See Adam of Bremen in *Grotii Prolegomenis*, p. 10. The temple of Upsal was destroyed by Ingo king of Sweden, who began his reign in

CHAP. that now subsist of this barbaric superstition are contained in the Edda, a system of mythology, compiled in Iceland about the thirteenth century, and studied by the learned of Denmark and Sweden, as the most valuable remains of their ancient traditions.

Institu-
tions and
death of
Odin.

Notwithstanding the mysterious obscurity of the Edda, we can easily distinguish two persons confounded under the name of Odin; the god of war, and the great legislator of Scandinavia. The latter, the Mahomet of the north, instituted a religion adapted to the climate and to the people. Numerous tribes on either side of the Baltic were subdued by the invincible valour of Odin, by his persuasive eloquence, and by the fame, which he acquired, of a most skilful magician. The faith that he had propagated during a long and prosperous life, he confirmed by a voluntary death. Apprehensive of the ignominious approach of disease and infirmity, he resolved to expire as became a warrior. In a solemn assembly of the Swedes and Goths, he wounded himself in nine mortal places, hastening away (as he asserted with his dying voice) to prepare the feast of heroes in the palace of the god of war.

Agreeable
but uncer-
tain hypo-
thesis con-
cerning
Odin.

The native and proper habitation of Odin is distinguished by the appellation of As-gard. The happy resemblance of that name with As-burg,

in the year 1055, and about fourscore years afterwards a christian cathedral was erected on its ruins. See Dalin's History of Sweden, in the Bibliothèque Raisonnée.

¹ Mallet, Introduction à l'Histoire du Danemark.

or As-of,^l words of a singular signification, has given rise to an historical system of so pleasing a contexture, that we could almost wish to persuade ourselves of its truth. It is supposed that Odin was the chief of a tribe of barbarians which dwelt on the banks of the lake Maeotis, till the fall of Mithridates and the arms of Pompey menaced the north with servitude. That Odin, yielding with indignant fury to a power which he was unable to resist, conducted his tribe from the frontiers of the Asiatic Sarmatia into Sweden, with the great design of forming, in that inaccessible retreat of freedom, a religion and a people, which, in some remote age, might be subservient to his immortal revenge; when his invincible Goths, armed with martial fanaticism, should issue in numerous swarms from the neighbourhood of the polar circle, to chastise the oppressors of mankind.^m

If ~~so many~~^{Emigration of the} successive generations of Goths were capable of preserving a faint tradition of their Scandinavian origin, we must not expect, from

Scandinavia into Prussia.

^l Mallet, c. iv, p. 55, has collected from Strabo, Pliny, Ptolemy, and Stephanus Byzantinus, the vestiges of such a city and people.

^m This wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an epic poem, cannot safely be received as authentic history. According to the obvious sense of the Edda, and the interpretation of the most skilful critics, As-gard, instead of denoting a real city of the Asiatic Sarmatia, is the fictitious appellation of the mystic abode of the gods, the Olympus of Scandinavia, from whence the prophet was supposed to descend, when he announced his new religion to the Gothic nations, who were already seated in the southern parts of Sweden.

CHAP. such unlettered barbarians, any distinct account X. of the time and circumstances of their emigration. To cross the Baltic was an easy and natural attempt. The inhabitants of Sweden were masters of a sufficient number of large vessels, with oars,ⁿ and the distance is little more than one hundred miles from Carlscroon to the nearest ports of Pomerania and Prussia. Here, at length, we land on firm and historic ground. At least as early as the christian era,^o and as late as the age of the Antonines,^p the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula, and in that fertile province where the commercial cities of Thorn, Elbing, Koningsberg, and Dantick, were long afterwards founded.^q Westward of the Goths, the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder, and the sea-coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburg. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion, and language, seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people.^r The latter appear to have been sub-

ⁿ Tacit. Germania, c. 44.

^o Tacit. Annal. ii, 62. If we could yield a firm assent to the navigations of Pytheas of Marseilles, we must allow that the Goths had passed the Baltic at least three hundred years before Christ.

^p Ptolemy, l. ii.

^q By the German colonies, who followed the arms of the Teutonic knights. The conquest and conversion of Prussia were completed by those adventurers in the thirteenth century.

^r Pliny (Hist. Natur. iv, 14) and Procopius (in Bell. Vandal. l. i, c. 1) agree in this opinion. They lived in distant ages, and possessed different means of investigating the truth.

divided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidae.¹ The distinction among the Vandals was more strongly marked by the independent names of Heruli, Burgundians, Lombards, and a variety of other petty states, many of which, in a future age, expanded themselves into powerful monarchies.

In the age of the Antonines, the Goths were still seated in Prussia. About the reign of Alexander Severus, the Roman province of Dacia had already experienced their proximity by frequent and destructive inroads.² In this interval, therefore, of about seventy years, we must place the second migration of the Goths from the Baltic to the Euxine; but the cause that produced it lies concealed among the various motives which actuate the conduct of unsettled barbarians. Either a pestilence, or a famine, a victory, or a defeat, an oracle of the gods, or the eloquence of a daring leader, were sufficient to impel the Gothic arms on the milder climates of the south. Besides the influence of a ~~material~~ religion, the numbers and spirit of the Goths were equal to

* The *Ostro* and *Visi*, the eastern and western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and settlements, they preserved, with their names, the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden, the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The third being a heavy sailer, lagged behind, and the crew, which afterwards swelled into a nation, received, from that circumstance, the appellation of Gepidae, or loiterers. *Jornandes*, c. 17.

¹ See a fragment of Peter Patricius in the *Excerpta Legationum*; and with regard to its probable date, see *Tillemont*, *Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. iii, p. 346.

CHAP. the most dangerous adventures. The use of round
 X. bucklers and short swords rendered them formidable in a close engagement; the manly obedience which they yielded to hereditary kings, gave uncommon union and stability to their councils; and the renowned Amala, the hero of that age, and the tenth ancestor of Theodoric, king of Italy, enforced, by the ascendant of personal merit, the prerogative of his birth, which he derived from the *anses*, or demi-gods of the Gothic nation.⁵

The Gothic nation increases in its march. The fame of a great enterprise excited the bravest warriors from all the Vandalic states of Germany, many of whom are seen a few years afterwards combating under the common standard of the Goths.⁶ The first motions of the emigrants carried them to the banks of the Prus, a river universally conceived by the ancients to be the southern branch of the Borysthenes.⁷ The windings of that great stream through the plains of Poland and Russia gave a direction to their line of march, and a constant supply of fresh water and pasture to their numerous herds of

⁵ *Omnium harum gentium insigne, rotunda scuta, breves gladii, et erga reges obsequium.* Tacit. Germania, c. 43. The Goths probably acquired their iron by the commerce of amber.

⁶ Jornandes, c. 13, d. 4.

⁷ The Heruli, and the Uregundi or Burgundi, are particularly mentioned. See Mascou's History of the Germans, l. v. A passage in the Augustan history, p. 28, seems to allude to this great emigration. The Maximian war was partly occasioned by the pressure of barbarous tribes, who fled before the arms of more northern barbarians.

⁸ D'Anyville, *Geographic Antiquine*, and the third part of his incomparable map of Europe.

cattle. They followed the unknown course of the river, confident in their valour, and careless of whatever power might oppose their progress. The Bastarnæ and the Venedi were the first who presented themselves; and the flower of their youth, either from choice or compulsion, increased the Gothic army. The Bastarnæ dwelt on the northern side of the Carpathian mountains: the immense tract of land that separated the Bastarnæ from the savages of Finland was possessed, or rather wasted, by the Venedi:^a we have some reason to believe that the first of these nations, which distinguished itself in the Macedonian war,^b and was afterwards divided into the formidable tribes of the Peucini, the Borani, the Carpi, &c. derived its origin from the Germans. With better authority, a Sarmatian extraction may be assigned to the Venedi, who rendered themselves so famous in the middle ages.^c But the confusion of blood and manners on that doubtful frontier often perplexed the most accurate observers.^d As the Goths advanced near the Euxine sea, they encountered a purer race of Sarmatians, the Jazyges, the Alani, and the Roxolani; and they were probably the first Germans who saw the mouths of the Borysthenes, and of the Tanais. If we inquire into the cha-

^a Tacit. Germania, c. 46.

^b Cluver. Germ. Antiqua, l. iii, c. 43.

^c The Venedi, the Slavi, and the Antes, were the three great tribes of the same people. Jornandes, c. 24.

^d Tacitus most assuredly deserves that title, and even his cautious suspense is a proof of his diligent inquiries.

CHAP. characteristic marks of the people of Germany and of
 X. Sarmatia, we shall discover that those two great
 portions of human kind were principally distin-
 guished by fixed huts or moveable tents, by a
 close dress, or flowing garments, by the marriage
 of one or of several wives, by a military force,
 consisting, for the most part, either of infantry or
 cavalry; and, above all, by the use of the Teuto-
 nic, or of the Sclavonian language, the last of
 which has been diffused, by conquest, from the
 confines of Italy to the neighbourhood of Japan.

Description of the Ukraine.

The Goths were now in possession of the Ukraine, a country of considerable extent and uncommon fertility, intersected with navigable rivers, which from either side discharge themselves into the Borysthenes, and interspersed with large and lofty forests of oaks. The plenty of game and fish, the innumerable bee-hives deposited in the hollow of old trees, and in the cavities of rocks, and forming, even in that rude age, a valuable branch of commerce, the size of the cattle, the temperature of the air, the aptness of the soil for every species of grain, and the luxuriancy of the vegetation, all displayed the liberality of nature, and tempted the industry of man.^c But the Goths withheld all these temptations, and still adhered to a life of idleness, of poverty, and of rapine.

* Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 593. Mr. Bell (vol. ii, p. 379) traversed the Ukraine in his journey from Petersburg to Constantinople. The modern face of the country is a just representation of the ancient, since, in the hands of the Cossacks, it still remains in a state of nature.

The Scythian hordes, which, towards the east, bordered on the new settlements of the Goths, presented nothing to their arms, except the doubtful chance of an unprofitable victory. But the prospect of the Roman territories was far more alluring, and the fields of Dacia were covered with rich harvests, sown by the hands of an industrious, and exposed to be gathered by those of a warlike, people. It is probable, that the conquests of Trajan, maintained by his successors, less for any real advantage, than for ideal dignity, had contributed to weaken the empire on that side. The new and unsettled province of Dacia was neither strong enough to resist, nor rich enough to satiate, the rapaciousness of the barbarians. As long as the remote banks of the Niester were considered as the boundary of the Roman power, the fortifications of the Lower Danube were more carelessly guarded, and the inhabitants of Mæsia lived in supine security, fondly conceiving themselves at an inaccessible distance from any barbarian invaders. The irruptions of the Goths, under the reign of Philip, fatally convinced them of their mistake. The king, or leader of that fierce nation, traversed with contempt the province of Dacia, and passed both the Niester and the Danube without encountering any opposition capable of retarding his progress. The relaxed discipline of the Roman troops betrayed the most important posts, where they were stationed, and the fear of deserved punishment induced great numbers of them to enlist

The Goths
invade the
Roman
provinces.

CHAP. under the Gothic standard. The various multitude of barbarians appeared, at length, under the walls of Marcianopolis, a city built by Trajan in honour of his sister, and at that time the capital of the second Mæsia.¹ The inhabitants consented to ransom their lives and property, by the payment of a large sum of money, and the invaders retreated back into their deserts, animated rather than satisfied, with the first success of their arms against an opulent but feeble country. Intelligence was soon transmitted to the emperor Decius, that Cniva, king of the Goths, had passed the Danube a second time, with more considerable forces; that his numerous detachments scattered devastation over the province of Mæsia, whilst the main body of the army, consisting of seventy thousand Germans and Sarmatians, a force equal to the most daring achievements, required the presence of the Roman monarch, and the exertion of his military power.

Various events of the Gothic war
A. D. 250.

Decius found the Goths engaged before Nicopolis, on the Jatrus, one of the many monuments of Trajan's victories.² On his approach they raised the siege, but with a design only of marching away to a conquest of greater import-

¹ In the sixteenth chapter of Jernandes, instead of *secunda Mæsiam*, we may venture to substitute *secundam*, the second Mæsia, of which Marcianopolis was certainly the capital (see Hierocles de Provinciis, and Wesseling ad locum, p. 636, Itenerar.). It is surprising how this palpable error of the scribe could escape the judicious correction of Grotius.

² The place is still called Nicop. The little stream, on whose banks it stood, falls into the Danube. D'Anville, *Geographie Ancienne*, tom. i, p. 307.

ance, the siege of Philippopolis, a city of Thrace, founded by the father of Alexander, near the foot of mount Haemus.^a Decius followed them through a difficult country, and by forced marches; but when he imagined himself at a considerable distance from the rear of the Goths, Cniva turned with rapid fury on his pursuers. The camp of the Romans was surprised and pillaged, and, for the first time, their emperor fled in disorder before a troop of half armed barbarians. After a long resistance, Philippopolis, destitute of succour, was taken by storm. A hundred thousand persons are reported to have been massacred in the sack of that great city.^b Many prisoners of consequence became a valuable accession to the spoil; and Priscus, a brother of the late emperor Philip, blushed not to assume the purple under the protection of the barbarous enemies of Rome.^c The time, however, consumed in that tedious siege, enabled Decius to revive the courage, restore the discipline, and recruit the numbers of his troops. He intercepted several parties of Carpi, and other Germans, who were hastening to share the victory of their countrymen,^d intrusted the passes of the mountains to officers of approved valour and fidelity,^e repaired

^a Stephan. Byzant. de Urbibus, p. 740. Wesselink Itenerar. p. 136. Zonaras, by an odd mistake, ascribes the foundation of Philippopolis to the immediate predecessor of Decius.

^b Ammian. xxxi, 5.

^c Aurel. Victor, c. 25.

^d Pictoris earpiece, on some medals of Decius, insinuate these advantages.

^e Claudius (who afterwards reigned with so much glory) was posted in the pass of Thermopylae with 200 Dardanians, 100 heavy and

CHAP. and strengthened the fortifications of the Danube,
 X. and exerted his utmost vigilance to oppose either the progress or the retreat of the Goths. Encouraged by the return of fortune, he anxiously waited for an opportunity to retrieve, by a great and decisive blow, his own glory, and that of the Roman arms.ⁿ

Decius re-vives the office of censor in the person of Valerian.

At the same time when Decius was struggling with the violence of the tempest, his mind calm and deliberate amidst the tumult of war, investigated the more general causes, that, since the age of the Antonines, had so impetuously urged the decline of the Roman greatness. He soon discovered that it was impossible to replace that greatness on a permanent basis, without restoring public virtue, ancient principles and manners, and the oppressed majesty of the laws. To execute this noble but arduous design, he first resolved to revive the ~~ancient~~ office of censor; an office, which, as long as it had subsisted in its pristine integrity, had so much contributed to the perpetuity of the state,^o till it was usurped and gradually neglected.

and 160 light horse, 60 Cretan archers, and 1000 well armed recruits. See an original letter from the emperor to his officer, in the Augustan history, p. 200.

ⁿ Jornandes, c. 16-18. Zosimus, l. i, p. 22. In the general account of this war, it is easy to discover the opposite prejudices of the Gothic and the Grecian writer. In carelessness alone they are alike.

^o Montesquieu, *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*, c. viii. He illustrates the nature and use of the censorship with his usual ingenuity, and with uncommon precision.

by the Cæsars.^p Conscious that the favour of the sovereign may confer power, but that the esteem of the people can alone bestow authority, he submitted the choice of the censor to the unbiassed voice of the senate. By their unanimous votes, or rather acclamations, Valerian, who was afterwards emperor, and who then served with distinction in the army of Decius, was declared the most worthy of that exalted honour. As soon as the decree of the senate was transmitted to the emperor, he assembled a great council in his camp, and, before the investiture of the censor elect, he apprised him of the difficulty and importance of his great office. “Happy Valerian,” said the prince to his distinguished subject, “happy in the general probation of the senate and of the Roman public! Accept the censorship of mankind; and judge of our manners. You will select those who deserve to continue members of the senate; you will restore the equestrian order to its ancient splendour; you will improve the revenue, yet moderate the public burdens. You will distinguish into regular classes the various and infinite multitude of citizens, and accurately review the military strength, the wealth, the virtue, and the resources of Rome. Your decisions shall obtain the force of laws. The army, the palace, the ministers of justice,

^p Vespasian and Titus were the last censors (Pliny Hist. Natur. vii, 49. Censorinus de Die Natali). The modesty of Trajan refused an honour which he deserved, and his example became a law to the Antonines. See Pliny's Panegyric, c. 45 and 60.

CHAP. " and the great officers of the empire are all
 X. " subject to your tribunal. None are exempted,
 " excepting only the ordinary consuls,^a the
 " prefect of the city, the king of the sacrifices,
 " and (as long as she preserves her chastity in-
 " violate) the eldest of the vestal virgins. Even
 " these few, who may not dread the severity,
 " will anxiously solicit the esteem, of the Ro-
 " man censor."^r

The design impracticable and without effect. A magistrate, invested with such extensive powers, would have appeared not so much the minister as the colleague of his sovereign.^t

Valerian justly dreaded an elevation so full of envy and of suspicion. He modestly urged the alarming greatness of the trust, his own insufficiency, and the incurable corruption of the times. He artfully insinuated, that the office of censor was inseparable from the imperial dignity, and that the feeble hands of a subject were unequal to the support of such an immense weight of cares and of power.^t The approaching event of war soon put an end to the prosecution of a project so specious but so impracticable; and whilst it preserved Valerian from the danger, saved the emperor Decius from the disappointment which would most probably have attended

^a Yet, in spite of this exemption, Pompey appeared before that tribunal during his consulship. The occasion indeed was equally singular ~~and~~ honourable. Plutarch in Pomp. p. 630.

^r See the original speech, in the Augustan Hist. p. 173, 174.

^t This transaction might deceive Zonaras, who supposes that Valerian was actually declared the colleague of Decius, l. xii, p. 625.

^t Hist. August. p. 174. The emperor's reply is omitted.

it. A censor may maintain, he can never restore, ^{CHAP.}
 the morals of a state. It is impossible for such ^{X.}
 a magistrate to exert his authority with benefit,
 or even with effect, unless he is supported by a
 quick sense of honour and virtue in the minds of
 the people; by a decent reverence for the public
 opinion, and by a train of useful prejudices com-
 bating on the side of national manners. In a
 period when these principles are annihilated, the
 censorial jurisdiction must either sink into empty
 pageantry, or be converted into a partial instru-
 ment of vexatious oppression.^a It was easier to
 vanquish the Goths, than to eradicate the public
 vices; yet, even in the first of these enterprises,
 Decius lost his army and his life.

The Goths were now on every side surrounded and pursued by the Roman arms. The flower of their troops had perished in the long siege of Philippopolis, and the exhausted country could no longer afford subsistence for the remaining multitude of licentious barbarians. Reduced to this extremity, the Goths would gladly have purchased, by the surrender of all their booty and prisoners, the permission of an undisturbed retreat. But the emperor, confident of victory, and resolving, by the chastisement of these invaders, to strike a salutary terror into the nations of the north, refused to listen to any terms of accommodation. The high spirited barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure

^a Such as the attempts of Augustus towards a reformation of magis-
 teria. Tacit. Annal. iii, 24.

CHAP. X. town of Mæsia, called Forum Terebronii,² was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines, and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated to the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops, that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic.³ The conflict was terrible; it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remained entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. “Here the fortune of the day turned, and all things became adverse to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour heavy, the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their weighty javelins. The barbarians, on the contrary, were enured to encounters in the bogs, their persons tall, their spears long, such as could wound at a

² Tillemont, Histoire des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 598. As Zosimus and some of his followers mistake the Danube for the Tanais, they place the field of battle in the plains of Scythia.

³ Aurelius Victor allows two distinct actions for the deaths of the two Decii; but I have preferred the account of Jernandus.

“distance.”^a In this morass the Roman army, ^{CHAP.}
 after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably
 lost; nor could the body of the emperor ever be
 found.^b Such was the fate of Decius, in the
 fiftieth year of his age; an accomplished prince,
 active in war, and affable in peace;^c who, toge-
 ther with his son, has deserved to be compared,
 both in life and death, with the brightest ex-
 amples of ancient virtue.^c

This fatal blow humbled, for a very little time, ^{Election of}
 the insolence of the legions. They appear to
 have patiently expected, and submissively obeyed,
 the decree of the senate which regulated the
 succession to the throne. From a just regard
 for the memory of Decius, the imperial title
 was conferred on Hostilianus, his only surviv-
 ing son; but an equal rank, with more effectual
 power, was granted to Gallus, whose expe-
 rience and ability seemed equal to the great
 trust of guardian to the young prince and the
 distressed empire.^d The first care of the new
 emperor was to deliver the Illyrian provinces

^a I have ventured to copy from Tacitus (*Annal.* i, 64) the pic-
 ture of a similar engagement between a Roman army and a German
 tribe.

^b Jornandes, c. 18. Zosimus, l. i, p. 22. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 627.
 Aurelius Victor.

^c The Decii were killed before the end of the year two hundred
 and fifty-one, since the new princes took possession of the consulship
 on the ensuing calends of January.

^d Hist. August. p. 223, gives them a very honourable place among
 the small number of good emperors who reigned between Augustus
 and Diocletian.

^e Haec ubi patres comperere decernunt. Victor in Ca-
 saribus.

CHAP. from the intolerable weight of the victorious
 X. Goths. He consented to leave in their hands
 A.D. 252. the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense
 . booty, and, what was still more disgraceful, a
 great number of prisoners of the highest merit
 Retreat of and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp
 the Goths. with every conveniency that could assuage their
 angry spirits, or facilitate their so much wished-
 for departure; and he even promised to pay them
 annually a large sum of gold, on condition they
 should never afterwards infest the Roman terri-
 tories by their incursions.^e

Gallus
purchases
peace by
the pay-
ment of an
annual tri-
bute.

In the age of the Scipios, the most opulent kings of the earth, who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chair, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coins. After the wealth of nations had centered in Rome, the emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity

^e Zonaras, l. xii, p. 628.

^f A *sellæ*, a *toga*, and a golden *patera* of five pounds weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy king of Egypt. (Livy, xxvii, 4). *Qui millia æris*, a weight of copper, in value about eighteen pounds sterling, was the usual present made to foreign ambassadors (Liv. xxxi, 9).

or the gratitude of the Romans ; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt.^s But this stipulation of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared without disguise in the light of an ignominious tribute ; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians ; and the prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion. The death of Hostilianus, though it happened in the midst of a raging pestilence, was interpreted as the personal crime of Gallus ;^b and even the defeat of the late emperor was ascribed by the voice of suspicion to the perfidious counsels of his hated successor.^t The tranquillity which the empire enjoyed during the first year of his administration^k served rather to inflame than to appease the public discontent ; and, as soon as the apprehensions of war were removed, the infamy of the peace was more deeply and more sensibly felt.

^s See the firmness of a Roman general so late as the time of Alexander Severus, in the *Excerpta Legationum*, p. 25, edit. Louvre.

^b For the plague, see Jornandes, c. 19, and Victor in Cæsaribus.

^t These improbable accusations are alleged by Zosimus, l. i, p. 23, 24.

^k Jornandes, c. 19. The Gothic writer at least observed the peace which his victorious countrymen had sworn to Gallus,

C H A P. But the Romans were irritated to a still higher degree, when they discovered that they had not even secured their repose, though at the expence of their honour. The dangerous secret of the wealth and weakness of the empire had been revealed to the world. New swarms of barbarians, encouraged by the success, and not conceiving themselves bound by the obligation, of their brethren, spread devastation through the Illyrian provinces, and terror as far as the gates of Rome. The defence of the monarchy, which seemed abandoned by the pusillanimous emperor, was assumed by *Æmilianus*, governor of Pannonia and Mæsia; who rallied the scattered forces, and revived the fainting spirits of the troops. The barbarians were unexpectedly attacked, routed, chased, and pursued beyond the Danube. The victorious leader distributed as a donative the money collected for the tribute, and the acclamations of the soldiers proclaimed him emperor on the field of battle.¹ Gallus, who, careless of the general welfare, indulged himself in the pleasures of Italy, was almost in the same instant informed of the success, of the revolt, and of the rapid approach of his aspiring lieutenant. He advanced to meet him as far as the plains of Spoleto. When the armies came in sight of each other, the soldiers of Gallus compared the ignominious conduct of their sovereign with the glory of his rival. They admired the valour of *Æmilianus*; they were attracted by his liberality,

*Victory
and revolt
of *Æmilianus*.
A. D. 253.*

¹ Zosimus, l. i, p. 25, 26.

for he offered a considerable increase of pay to CHAP.
all deserters.^m The murder of Gallus, and of his son Volusianus, put an end to the civil war; and the senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilianus to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. He assured them, that he should resign to their wisdom the civil administration; and, contenting himself with the quality of their general, would in a short time assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the empire from all the barbarians both of the north and of the east.ⁿ His pride was flattered by the applause of the senate; and medals are still extant, representing him with the name and attributes of Hercules the victor, and Mars the avenger.^o

If the new monarch possessed the abilities, he wanted the time necessary to fulfil these splendid promises. Less than four months intervened between his victory and his fall.^p He had vanquished Gallus; he sunk under the weight of a competitor more formidable than Gallus. That unfortunate prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany^q to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and as he arrived too late to

^m Victor in Cæsaribus.

ⁿ Zonaras, l. xii, p. 628.

^o Banduri Numismata, p. 94.

^p Eutropies, l. ix, c. 6, says tertio mense. Eusebius omits this emperor.

^q Zosimus, l. i, p. 28. Eutropius and Victor station Valerian's army n Rhætia.

Gallus abandoned
and slain.
A. D. 253.
May.

CHAP. save his sovereign, he resolved to revenge him.

X.

The troops of Æmilianus, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment as they had always been of constitutional principle, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's; who obtained the possession of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions; since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned.

A. D. 253.
August.

Character
of Vale-
rian.

Valerian was about sixty years of age^r when he was invested with the purple, not by the caprice of the populace, or the clamours of the army, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman world. In his gradual ascent through the honours of the state, he had deserved the favour of virtuous princes, and had declared himself the enemy of tyrants.^s His noble birth, his mild but unblemished manners, his learning, prudence, and experience, were revered by the senate and people; and if mankind (according to the observation of an ancient writer) had been

^r He was about seventy at the time of his accession, or, as it is more probable, of his death. Hist. August. p. 173. Tillemont, Hist. de Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 893, note 1.

^s Inimicus Tyrannorum. Hist. August. p. 173. In the glorious struggle of the senate against Maximin, Valerian acted a very spirit-ed part. Hist. August. p. 156.

left at liberty to choose a master, their choice CHAP.
would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian.^t X.
Perhaps the merit of this emperor was inadequate
to his reputation; perhaps his abilities, or
at least his spirit, were affected by the languor
and coldness of old age. The consciousness of General
his decline engaged him to share the throne with misfor-
a younger and more active associate;^u the tunes of
the reigns
emergency of the times demanded a general no
and Gallie-
less than a prince; and the experience of the nus.
Roman censor might have directed him where A.D.
253-268.
to bestow the imperial purple, as the reward of
military merit. But instead of making a judi-
cious choice, which would have confirmed his
reign, and endeared his memory, Valerian, con-
sulting only the dictates of affection or vanity,
immediately invested with the supreme honours
his son Gallienus, a youth whose effeminate vices
had been hitherto concealed by the obscurity of
a private station. The joint government of the
father and the son subsisted about seven, and the
sole administration of Gallienus continued about
eight years. But the whole period was one un-
interrupted series of confusion and calamity.
As the Roman empire was at the same time,
and on every side, attacked by the blind fury of
foreign invaders, and the wild ambition of do-

^t According to the distinction of Victor, he seems to have received the title of *imperator* from the army, and that of *Augustus* from the senate.^u

* From Victor, and from the medals, Tillemont (tom. iii, p. 710) very justly infers, that Gallienus was associated to the empire about the month of August of the year 253.

CHAP. mestic usurpers, we shall consult order and perspicuity, by pursuing, not so much the doubtful arrangement of dates, as the more natural distribution of subjects. The most dangerous enemies of Rome, during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, were, 1. The Franks. 2. The Alemanni. 3. The Goths; and, 4. The Persians. Under these general appellations, we may comprehend the adventurers of less considerable tribes, whose obscure and uncouth names would only serve to oppress the memory, and perplex the attention of the reader.

Origin and confederacy of the Franks. 1. As the posterity of the Franks compose one of the greatest and most enlightened nations of Europe, the powers of learning and ingenuity have been exhausted in the discovery of their unlettered ancestors. To the tales of credulity have succeeded the systems of fancy. Every passage has been sifted; every spot has been surveyed, that might possibly reveal some faint traces of their origin. It has been supposed that Pannonia,^x that Gaul, that the northern parts of Germany,^y gave birth to that celebrated colony of warriors. At length the most rational critics, rejecting the fictitious emigrations of ideal conquerors, have acquiesced in a sentiment whose simplicity persuades us of its

^x Various systems have been formed to explain a difficult passage in Gregory of Tours, I. ii, c. 9.

^y The Geographer of Ravenna, i, 11, by mentioning *Masringen* on the confines of Denmark, as the ancient seat of the Franks, gave birth to an ingenious system of Leibnitz.

truth.* They suppose that about the year two hundred and forty,* a new confederacy was formed under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and the Weser. The present circle of Westphalia, the land-graviate of Hesse, and the duchies of Brunswick and Lunenburg, were the ancient seat of the Chauci, who, in their inaccessible morasses, defied the Roman arms;^b of the Cherusci, proud of the fame of Arminius; of the Catti, formidable by their firm and intrepid infantry; and of several other tribes of inferior power and renown.^c The love of liberty was the ruling passion of these Germans; the enjoyment of it their best treasure; the word that expressed that enjoyment, the most pleasing to their ear. They deserved, they assumed, they maintained the honourable epithet of Franks or freemen; which concealed, though it did not extinguish, the peculiar names of the several states of the confederacy.^d Tacit consent, and mutual advantage, dictated the first laws of the union; it was gradually cemented by habit and experience. The league of the Franks may admit of some

* See Cluver. *Germania Antiqua*, l. iii, c. 20. M. Freret, in the *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, tom. xviii.

* Most probably under the reign of Gordian, from an accidental circumstance, fully canvassed by Tillemont, tom. iii, p. 710, 1181.

^b Plin. *Hist. Natur.* xvi, 1. The panegyrists frequently allude to the morasses of the Franks.

^c Tacit. *Germania*, c. 30, 37.

^d In a subsequent period, most of those old names are occasionally mentioned. See some vestiges of them in Cluver. *Germ. Antiq.* l. iii.

CHAP. comparison with the Helvetic body; in which
 X. every canton, retaining its independent sove-
 reignty, consults with its brethren in the com-
 mon cause, without acknowledging the autho-
 rity of any supreme head, or representative as-
 sembly.^e But the principle of the two confede-
 racies was extremely different. A peace of two
 hundred years has rewarded the wise and honest
 policy of the Swiss. An inconstant spirit, the thirst
 of rapine, and a disregard to the most solemn trea-
 ties, disgraced the character of the Franks.

^{They in-}
^{vade Gaul,} The Romans had long experienced the daring
 valour of the people of Lower Germany. The
 union of their strength threatened Gaul with a
 more formidable invasion, and required the pre-
 sence of Gallienus, the heir and colleague of
 imperial power.^f Whilst that prince, and his
 infant son Salonius, displayed, in the court of
 Treves, the majesty of the empire, its armies
 were ably conducted by their general Posthumus,
 who, though he afterwards betrayed the family
 of Valerian, was ever faithful to the great inter-
 est of the monarchy. The treacherous language
 of panegyrics and medals darkly announces a
 long series of victories. Trophies and titles at-
 test (if such evidence can attest) the fame of
 Posthumus, who is repeatedly styled the conquer-
 er of the Germans, and the saviour of Gaul.^g

^e Simler de Republica Helvet. cum notis Fuseli.

^f Zosimus, l. i, p. 27.

^g M. de Brequigny (in the Memoires de l'Academie, tom. xxx) has
 given us a very curious life of Posthumus. A series of the Augus-
 tan history, from medals and inscriptions, has been more than once
 planned, and is still much wanted.

But a single fact, the only one indeed of which we have any distinct knowledge, erases, in a great measure, these monuments of vanity and adulatation. The Rhine, though dignified with the title of safeguard of the provinces, was an imperfect barrier against the daring spirit of enterprise with which the Franks were actuated. Their rapid devastations stretched from the river to the foot of the Pyrenees: nor were they stopped by those mountains. Spain, which had never dreaded, was unable to resist, the inroads of the Germans. During twelve years, the greatest part of the reign of Gallienus, that opulent country was the theatre of unequal and destructive hostilities. Tarragona, the flourishing capital of a peaceful province, was sacked and almost destroyed; and so late as the days of Orosius, who wrote in the fifth century, wretched cottages, scattered amidst the ruins of magnificent cities, still recorded the rage of the barbarians.¹ When the exhausted country no longer supplied a variety of plunder, the Franks seized on some vessels in the ports of Spain,² and transported themselves into Mauritania. The distant province was astonished with the fury of these barbarians, who seemed to

¹ Aurel. Victor, c. 83. Instead of *Pene direpto*, both the sense and the expression require *deleto*, though indeed, for different reasons, it is alike difficult to correct the text of the best, and of the worst, writers.

² In the time of Ausonius (the end of the fourth century) Ilerda, or Lerida, was in a very ruinous state (Auson. Epist. xxv, 58), which probably was the consequence of this invasion.

* Valesius is therefore mistaken in supposing that the Franks had invaded Spain by sea.

~~SHAP.~~ fall from a new world, as their name, manners,
 X. and complexion, were equally unknown on the
 coast of Africa.¹

~~Origin and
renown of
the Suevi.~~ II. In that part of Upper Saxony beyond the Elbe, which is at present called the marquisate of Lusace, there existed, in ancient times, a sacred wood, the awful seat of the superstition of the Suevi. None were permitted to enter the holy precincts, without confessing, by their servile bonds and suppliant posture, the immediate presence of the sovereign Deity.² Patriotism contributed as well as devotion to consecrate the Sonnenwald, or wood of the Semnones.³ It was universally believed, that the nation had received its first existence on that sacred spot. At stated periods, the numerous tribes who gloried in the Suevic blood, resorted thither by their ambassadors; and the memory of their common extraction was perpetuated by barbaric rites and human sacrifices. The wide extended name of Suevi filled the interior countries of Germany, from the banks of the Oder to those of the Danube. They were distinguished from the other Germans by their peculiar mode of dressing their long hair, which they gathered into a rude knot on the crown of the head; and they delighted in an ornament that shewed their ranks more lofty and terrible in the eyes of the enemy.⁴ Jealous as the Germans were of military renown, they

¹ Aurel. Victor. Eutrop. ix, 6.

² Tacit. Germania, 38. ³ Cluver. Germ. Antiq. iii, 25.

⁴ Sic Suevi a ceteris Germanis, sic Seuvorum ingenui a servis se parantur. A proud separation!

all confessed the superior valour of the Suevi; CHAP.
and the tribes of the Usipetes and Tencteri,
who, with a vast army, encountered the dictator
Cæsar, declared that they esteemed it not a dis-
grace to have fled before a people, to whose arms
the immortal gods themselves were unequal.*

In the reign of the emperor Caracalla, an in-
numerable swarm of Suevi appeared on the
banks of the Mein, and in the neighbourhood of
the Roman provinces, in quest either of food, Alemanni,
of plunder, or of glory.* The hasty army of
volunteers gradually coalesced into a great and
permanent nation; and as it was composed from
so many different tribes, assumed the name of
Alemanni; or *All-men*; to denote at once their
various lineage, and their common bravery.[†] The latter was soon felt by the Romans in
many a hostile inroad. The Alemanni fought
chiefly on horseback; but their cavalry was ren-
dered still more formidable by a mixture of light
infantry, selected from the bravest and most
active of the youth, whom frequent exercise had
enured to accompany the horseman in the longest
march, the most rapid charge, or the most pre-
cipitate retreat.[‡]

* Cæsar in *Bello Gallico*, iv, 7.

† Victor in *Caracal.* Dion Cassius, Ixvii, p. 1350.

‡ This etymology (far different from those which amuse the fancy of the learned) is preserved by Asinius Quadratus, an original historian, quoted by Agathias, i, c. 5.

The Suevi engaged Cæsar in this manner, and the manœuvre deserved the approbation of the conqueror (in *Bello Gallico*, i, 48).

CHAP.
X.invade
Gaul and
Italy,

This warlike people of Germans had been astonished by the immense preparations of Alexander Sevrus; they were dismayed by the arms of his successor, a barbarian equal in valour and fierceness to themselves. But still hovering on the frontiers of the empire, they increased the general disorder that ensued after the death of Decius. They inflicted severe wounds on the rich provinces of Gaul; they were the first who removed the veil that covered the feeble majesty of Italy. A numerous body of the Alemanni penetrated across the Danube, and through the Rhætian Alps, into the plains of Lombardy, advanced as far as Ravenna, and displayed the victorious banners of barbarians almost in sight of Rome.* The insult and the danger rekindled in the senate some sparks of their ancient virtue. Both the emperors were engaged in far distant wars; Valerian in the East, and Gallienus on the Rhine. All the hopes and resources of the Romans were in themselves. In this emergency, the senators resumed the defence of the republic, drew out the praetorian guards, who had been left to garrison the capital, and filled up their numbers, by enlisting into the public service the stoutest and most willing of the plebeians. The Alemanni, astonished with the sudden appearance of an army more numerous than their own, retired into Germany, laden with spoil; and their retreat was esteemed as a victory by the unwarlike Romans.^t

* Hist. August. p. 215, 216. Dexippus in the Excerpta Legit-
onum, p. 8. Heronym. Chron. Orosius, vii, 22.

^t Zosimus, l. i, p. 34.

When Gallienus received the intelligence that his capital was delivered from the barbarians, he was much less delighted, than alarmed, with the courage of the senate, since it might one day prompt them to rescue the public from domestic tyranny, as well as from foreign invasion. His timid ingratitude was published to his subjects, in an edict which prohibited the senators from exercising any military employment, and even from approaching the camps of the legions. But his fears were groundless. The rich and luxurious nobles, sinking into their natural character, accepted, as a favour, this disgraceful exemption from military service; and as long as they were indulged in the enjoyment of their baths, their theatres, and their villas, they cheerfully resigned the more dangerous cares of empire, to the rough hands of peasants and soldiers.^a

Another invasion of the Alemanni, of a more formidable aspect, but more glorious event, is mentioned by a writer of the lower empire. Three hundred thousand of that warlike people are said to have been vanquished, in a battle near Milan, by Gallienus in person, at the head of only ten thousand Romans.^x We may, however, with great probability, ascribe this incredible victory, either to the credulity of the historian, or to some exaggerated exploits of one of the emperor's lieutenants. It was by arms of a very

^a *Aurel. Victor*, in *Gallieno et Probo*. His complaints breathe an uncommon spirit of freedom.

^x *Zonaras*, l. xii, p. 631.

CHAP. different nature, that Gallienus endeavoured to
 X. protect Italy from the fury of the Germans. He
 espoused Pipa, the daughter of a king of the
 Marcomanni, a Suevic tribe, which was often
 confounded with the Alemanni in their wars
 and conquests.¹ To the father, as the price of
 his alliance, he granted an ample settlement in
 Pannonia. The native charms of unpolished
 beauty, seem to have fixed the daughter in the
 affections of the inconstant emperor, and the bands
 of policy were more firmly connected by those of
 love. But the haughty prejudice of Rome still
 refused the name of marriage, to the profane
 mixture of a citizen and a barbarian; and has
 stigmatized the German princess with the op-
 probrious title of concubine of Gallienus.²

Inroads of
the Goths.

III. We have already traced the emigration of
 the Goths from Scandinavia, or at least from
 Prussia, to the mouth of the Borysthenes, and
 have followed their victorious arms from the
 Borysthenes to the Danube. Under the reigns of
 Valerian and Gallienus, the frontier of the last-
 mentioned river was perpetually infested by the
 inroads of Germans and Sarmatians; but it was
 defended by the Romans with more than usual
 firmness and success. The provinces that were
 the seat of war recruited the armies of Rome
 with an inexhaustible supply of hardy soldiers;
 and more than one of these Illyrian peasants

¹ One of the Victors calls him king of the Marcomanni; the other, of the Germans.

² See Tillemont. Hist. des Empereurs, tom. iii, p. 398, &c.

attained the station, and displayed the abilities, ^{C H A P.}
of a general. Though flying parties of the barba-
rians, who incessantly hovered on the banks of
the Danube, penetrated sometimes to the con-
fines of Italy and Macedonia, their progress was
commonly checked, or their return intercepted,
by the imperial lieutenants.^a But the great
stream of the Gothic hostilities was diverted
into a very different channel. The Goths, in
their new settlement of the Ukraine, soon be-
came masters of the northern coast of the Euxine:
to the south of that inland sea, were situated
the soft and wealthy provinces of Asia Minor,
which possessed all that could attract, and no-
thing that could resist, a barbarian conqueror.

The banks of the Borysthenes are only sixty miles distant from the narrow entrance^b of the peninsula of Crim Tartary, known to the ancients under the name of Chersonesus Taurica.^c On that hospitable shore, Euripides, embellishing with exquisite art the tales of antiquity, has placed the scene of one of his most affecting tragedies.^d The bloody sacrifices of Diana, the arrival of Orestes and Pylades, and the triumph of virtue and religion over savage fierceness, serve to represent an historical truth, that the Tauri,

<sup>Conquest
of the Bos-
phorus by
the Goths;</sup>

^a See the lives of Claudio, Aurelian, and Probus, in the Augustan History.

^b It is about half a league in breadth. Genealogical History of the Tartars, p. 59.

^c M. de Peyssonel, who had been French consul at Caffa, in his Observations sur les Peuples Barbares, qui ont habité les bords du Danube.

^d Euripides in Iphigenia in Taurid.

CHAP. the original inhabitants of the peninsula, were,
 X. in some degree, reclaimed from their brutal man-
 ners, by a gradual intercourse with the Grecian
 colonies, which settled along the maritime coast.
 The little kingdom of Bosphorus, whose capital
 was situated on the straits, through which the
 Maeotis communicates itself to the Euxine, was
 composed of degenerate Greeks, and half civil-
 ized barbarians. It subsisted, as an independent
 state, from the time of the Peloponnesian war,^e
 was at last swallowed up by the ambition of Mi-
 thridates,^f and, with the rest of his dominions,
 sunk under the weight of the Roman arms. From
 the reign of Augustus,^g the kings of Bosphorus
 were the humble, but not useless, allies of the
 empire. By presents, by arms, and by a slight
 fortification drawn across the isthmus, they ef-
 fectually guarded against the roving plunderers
 of Sarmatia, the access of a country, which, from
 its peculiar situation and convenient harbours,
 commanded the Euxine sea and Asia Minor.^h
 As long as the sceptre was possessed by a lineal
 succession of kings, they acquitted themselves of
 their important charge with vigilance and success.
 Domestic factions, and the fears, or private in-

* Strabo, l. vii, p. 309. The first kings of Bosphorus were the allies of Athens.

^f Appian in Mithridat.

^g It was reduced by the arms of Agrippa. Orosius, vi, 21. Eu-
 tropius, vii, 9. The Romans once advanced within three days
 march of the Tanais. Tacit. Annal. xii, 17.

^h See the Toxaris of Lucian, if we credit the sincerity and the
 virtues of the Scythian, who relates a great war of his nation against
 the kings of Bosphorus.

terest, of obscure usurpers, who seized on the ^{CHAP.}
 vacant throne, admitted the Goths into the heart
 of Bosphorus. With the acquisition of a super-
 fluous waste of fertile soil, the conquerors ob-
 tained the command of a naval force, sufficient
 to transport their armies to the coast of Asia.¹
 The ships used in the navigation of the Euxine ^{who ac-}
 were of a very singular construction. They were ^{quire a na-}
 slight flat-bottomed barks framed of timber only,
 without the least mixture of iron, and occasion-
 ally covered with a shelving roof, on the appear-
 ance of a tempest.* In these floating houses,
 the Goths carelessly trusted themselves to the
 mercy of an unknown sea, under the conduct of
 sailors pressed into the service, and whose skill
 and fidelity were equally suspicious. But the
 hopes of plunder had banished every idea of dan-
 ger, and a natural fearlessness of temper supplied
 in their minds the more rational confidence, which
 is the just result of knowledge and experience.
 Warriors of such a daring spirit must have often
 murmured against the cowardice of their guides,
 who required the strongest assurances of a settled
 calm before they would venture to embark, and
 would scarcely ever be tempted to lose sight of
 the land. Such, at least, is the practice of the
 modern Turks;¹ and they are probably not in-
 ferior, in the art of navigation, to the ancient in-
 habitants of Bosphorus.

¹ Zosimus, I. i. p. 28.

* Strab. I. xi. Tacit. Hist. iii. 47. They were called *Camara*.

¹ See a very natural picture of the Euxine navigation, in the six-
 teenth letter of Tournefort.

CHAP.

X.

First naval
expedition
of the
Goths.

The fleet of the Goths, leaving the coast of Circassia on the left hand, first appeared before Pityus,^m the utmost limits of the Roman provinces; a city provided with a convenient port, and fortified with a strong wall. Here they met with a resistance more obstinate than they had reason to expect from the feeble garrison of a distant fortress. They were repulsed; and their disappointment seemed to diminish the terror of the Gothic name. As long as Successianus, an officer of superior rank and merit, defended that frontier, all their efforts were ineffectual; but as soon as he was removed by Valerian to a more honourable but less important station, they resumed the attack of Pityus; and, by the destruction of that city, obliterated the memory of their former disgrace.ⁿ

^{The Goths besiege and take Trebizond.} Circling round the eastern extremity of the Euxine sea, the navigation from Pityus to Trebisond is about three hundred miles.^o The course of the Goths carried them in sight of the country of Colchis, so famous by the expedition of the Argonauts; and they even attempted, though without success, to pillage a rich temple at the mouth of the river Phasis. Trebisond, celebrated in the retreat of the ten thousand as an ancient colony of Greeks,^p derived its wealth

^m Arrian places the frontier garrison at Dioscurias, or Sebastopolis, forty-four miles to the east of Pityus. The garrison of Phasis consisted in his time of only four hundred foot. See the Periplus of the Euxine.

ⁿ Zosimus, l. i. p. 30.

^o Arrian (in Periplo Maris Euxin. p. 130) calls the distance 261 stadia.

^p Xenophon. Anabasis, l. iv, p. 348. Edit. Hutchinson.

and splendour from the munificence of the emperor Hadrian, who had constructed an artificial port on a coast left destitute by nature of secure harbours.^a The city was large and populous; a double inclosure of walls seemed to defy the fury of the Goths, and the usual garrison had been strengthened by a reinforcement of ten thousand men. But there are not any advantages capable of supplying the absence of discipline and vigilance. The numerous garrison of Trebizond, dissolved in riot and luxury, disdained to guard their impregnable fortifications. The Goths soon discovered the supine negligence of the besieged, erected a lofty pile of fascines, ascended the walls in the silence of the night, and entered the defenceless city, sword in hand. A general massacre of the people ensued, whilst the affrighted soldiers escaped through the opposite gates of the town. The most holy temples, and the most splendid edifices, were involved in a common destruction. The booty that fell into the hands of the Goths was immense; the wealth of the adjacent countries had been deposited in Trebizond, as in a secure place of refuge. The number of captives was incredible, as the victorious barbarians ranged without opposition through the extensive province of Pontus.^b The rich spoils of Trebizond filled a great fleet of ships that had been found in the port. The robust youth of the

^a Arrian, p. 129. The general observation is Tournefort's.

^b See an epistle of Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, quoted by Mascou, v. 37.

CHAP. sea-coast were chained to the oar; and the Goths, X. satisfied with the success of their first naval expedition, returned in triumph to their new establishments in the kingdom of Bosphorus.*

The second expedition of the Goths. The second expedition of the Goths was undertaken with greater powers of men and ships; but they steered a different course, and, disdaining the exhausted provinces of Pontus, followed the western coast of the Euxine, passed before the wide mouths of the Borysthenes, the Niester, and the Danube, and increasing their fleet by the capture of a great number of fishing barks, they approached the narrow outlet through which the Euxine sea pours its waters into the Mediterranean, and divides the continents of Europe and Asia. The garrison of Chalcedon was encamped near the temple of Jupiter Urius, on a promontory that commanded the entrance of the strait; and so inconsiderable were the dreaded invasions of the barbarians, that this body of troops sur-

They plundered the cities of Bithynia. passed in number the Gothic army. But it was in numbers alone that they surpassed it. They

deserted with precipitation their advantageous post, and abandoned the town of Chalcedon, most plentifully stored with arms and money, to the discretion of the conquerors. Whilst they hesitated whether they should prefer the sea or land, Europe or Asia, for the scene of their hostilities, a perfidious fugitive pointed out Nicomedia, once the capital of the kings of Bithynia, as a rich and easy conquest. He guided the march, which

* Zosimus, I. i. p. 32, 33,

was only sixty miles from the camp of Chalcedon,¹ directed the resistless attack, and partook of the booty; for the Goths had learned sufficient policy to reward the traitor, whom they detested. Nice, Prusa, Apæmæa, Cius, cities that had sometimes rivalled, or imitated, the splendour of Nicomedia, were involved in the same calamity, which, in a few weeks, raged without controul through the whole province of Bithynia. Three hundred years of peace, enjoyed by the soft inhabitants of Asia, had abolished the exercise of arms, and removed the apprehension of danger. The ancient walls were suffered to moulder away, and all the revenue of the most opulent cities was reserved for the construction of baths, temples, and theatres.²

When the city of Cyzicus withstood the utmost effort of Mithridates,³ it was distinguished by wise laws, a naval power of two hundred galleys, and three arsenals, of arms, of military engines, and of corn.⁴ It was still the seat of wealth and luxury; but of its ancient strength nothing remained except the situation, in a little island of the Propontis, connected with the continent of Asia only by two bridges. From the recent sack of Prusa, the Goths advanced within eighteen miles⁵ of the city, which they had de-

*Retreat of
the Goths.*

¹ Itiner. Hierosolym. p. 572. Wesselung.

² Zosimus, l. i. p. 32, 33.

³ He besieged the place with 400 galleys, 150,000 foot, and a numerous cavalry. See Plutarch in Lucul. Appian in Mithridat. Cicero pro Lege Manilia, c. 8.

⁴ Strab. l. xii. p. 573.

⁵ Pocock's description of the East, l. ii. c. 23, 24.

CHAP. voted to destruction; but the ruin of Cyzicus was delayed by a fortunate accident. The season was rainy, and the lake Apolloniates, the reservoir of all the springs of Mount Olympus, rose to an uncommon height. The little river of Rhynacus, which issues from the lake, swelled into a broad and rapid stream, and stopped the progress of the Goths. Their retreat to the maritime city of Heraclea, where the fleet had probably been stationed, was attended by a long train of waggons, laden with the spoils of Bithynia, and was marked by the flames of Nice and Nicomedia, which they wantonly burnt.^a Some obscure hints are mentioned of a doubtful combat that secured their retreat.^b But even a complete victory would have been of little moment, as the approach of the autumnal equinox summoned them to hasten their return. To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or after that of September, is esteemed by the modern Turks the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly.^c

Third na-
val expedi-
tion of the
Goths. When we are informed that the third fleet equipped by the Goths in the ports of Bosphorus, consisted of five hundred sail of ships,^d our ready imagination instantly computes and multiplies the formidable armament; but, as we are assured

^a Zosimus, l. i, p. 33.

^b Cynællus tells an unintelligible story of Prince *Odenathus*, who defeated the Goths, and who was killed by Prince *Odenathus*.

^c Voyages de Chardin, tom. i, p. 45. He sailed with the Turks from Constantinople to Caffa.

^d Syncellus (p. 382) speaks of this expedition as undertaken by the Heruli.

by the judicious Strabo,^{*} that the piratical vessels used by the barbarians of Pontus and the Lesser Scythia, were not capable of containing more than twenty-five or thirty men, we may safely affirm, that fifteen thousand warriors, at the most, embarked in this great expedition. Impatient of the limits of the Euxine, they steered their destructive course from the Cimmerian to the Thracian Bosphorus. When they had almost gained the middle of the straits, they were suddenly driven back to the entrance of them ; till a favourable wind, springing up the next day, carried them in a few hours into the placid sea, or rather lake, of the Propontis. Their landing on the little island of Cyzicus was attended with the ruin of that ancient and noble city. From thence issuing again through the narrow passage of the Hellespont, they pursued their winding navigation amidst the numerous islands scattered over the Archipelago, or the Ægean sea. The assistance of captives and deserters must have been very necessary to pilot their vessels, and to direct their various incursions, as well on the coast of Greece as on that of Asia. At length the Gothic fleet anchored in the port of Piræus, five miles distant from Athens,^f which had attempted to make some preparations for a vigorous defence. Cleodamus, one of the engineers employed by the emperor's orders to fortify the maritime cities against the Goths, had already begun to repair the ancient walls, fallen to decay since the time of

* Strabo, l. xi, p. 495.

^f Plin. Hist. Natur. iii. 7.

They pass
the Bos-
phorus and
the Helle-
pont,

CHAP. Sylla. The efforts of his skill were ineffectual, and the barbarians became masters of the native seat of the muses and the arts. But while the conquerors abandoned themselves to the licence of plunder and intemperance, their fleet, that lay with a slender guard in the harbour of Piræus, was unexpectedly attacked by the brave Dexippus, who flying with the engineer Cleodamus from the sack of Athens, collected a hasty band of volunteers, peasants as well as soldiers, and in some measure avenged the calamities of his country.⁵

**Savage
Greece, and
threaten
Italy.**

But this exploit, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Athens, served rather to irritate than to subdue the undaunted spirit of the northern invaders. A general conflagration blazed out at the same time in every district of Greece. Thebes and Argos, Corinth and Sparta, which had formerly waged such memorable wars against each other, were now unable to bring an army into the field, or even to defend their ruined fortifications. The rage of war, both by land and by sea, spread from the eastern point of Sunium to the western coast of Epirus. The Goths had already advanced within sight of Italy, when the approach of such imminent danger awakened the indolent Gallienus from his dream of pleasure. The emperor appeared in arms;

⁵ Hist. August. p. 181. Victor, c. 33. Orosius, vii, 42. Zosimus, l. i, p. 35. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 635. Syncellus, p. 382. It is not without some attention, that we can explain and conciliate their imperfect hints. We can still discover some traces of the partiality of Dexippus, in the relation of his own and his countrymen's exploits.

and his presence seems to have checked the ^{CHAP.}
ardour, and to have divided the strength, of the ^{X.}
enemy. Naulobatus, a chief of the Heruli, ac-
cepted an honourable capitulation, entered with <sup>Their di-
visions and
retreat.</sup>
a large body of his countrymen into the service
of Rome; and was invested with the ornaments
of the consular dignity, which had never before
been profaned by the hands of a barbarian.^{*}
Great numbers of the Goths, disgusted with the
perils and hardships of a tedious voyage, broke
into Mæsia, with a design of forcing their way
over the Danube to their settlements in the
Ukraine. The wild attempt would have proved
inevitable destruction, if the discord of the Roman
generals had not opened to the barbarians the
means of an escape.[†] The small remainder of
this destroying host returned on board their ves-
sels; and measuring back their way through the
Hellespont and the Bosphorus, ravaged in their
passage the shores of Troy, whose fame, immor-
talized by Homer, will probably survive the me-
mory of the Gothic conquests. As soon as they
found themselves in safety within the basin of the
Euxine, they landed at Anchialus in Thrace, near
the foot of Mount Hæmus; and, after all their
toils, indulged themselves in the use of those
pleasant and salutary hot baths. What remained

* Syncellus, p. 382. This body of Heruli was for a long time
faithful and famous.

† Claudio, who commanded on the Danube, thought with propri-
ty, and acted with spirit. His colleague was jealous of his fame,
Hist. August. p. 181.

CHAP. of the voyage was a short and easy navigation.^k

Such was the various fate of this third and greatest of their naval enterprises. It may seem difficult to conceive, how the original body of fifteen thousand warriors could sustain the losses and divisions of so bold an adventure. But as their numbers were gradually wasted by the sword, by shipwrecks, and by the influence of a warm climate, they were perpetually renewed by troops of banditti and deserters, who flocked to the standard of plunder, and by a crowd of fugitive slaves, often of German or Sarmatian extraction, who eagerly seized the glorious opportunity of freedom and revenge. In these expeditions, the Gothic nation claimed a superior share of honour and danger; but the tribes that fought under the Gothic banners are sometimes distinguished and sometimes confounded in the imperfect histories of that age; and as the barbarian fleets seemed to issue from the mouth of the Tanais, the vague but familiar appellation of Scythians was frequently bestowed on the mixed multitude.^l

Ruin of the
temple of
Ephesus.

In the general calamities of mankind, the death of an individual, however exalted, the ruin of an edifice, however famous, are passed over with careless inattention. Yet we cannot forget that the temple of Diana at Ephesus, after having risen with increasing splendour from seven re-

^k Jornandes, c. 20.

^l Zosimus and the Greeks (as the author of the *Philopatris*) give the name of Scythians to those whom Jornandes, and the Latin writers, constantly represent as Goths.

peated misfortunes,^m was finally burnt by the ~~Cham~~
 Goths in their third ~~great~~^x invasion. The arts of
 Greece, and the wealth of Asia, had conspired
 to erect that sacred and magnificent structure.
 It was supported by an hundred and twenty-
 seven marble columns of the Ionic order. They
 were the gifts of devout monarchs, and each was
 sixty feet high. The altar was adorned with
 the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, who had,
 perhaps, selected from the favourite legends of
 the place, the birth of the divine children of
 Latona, the concealment of Apollo after the
 slaughter of the Cyclops, and the clemency of
 Bacchus to the vanquished Amazons.ⁿ Yet the
 length of the temple of Ephesus was only four
 hundred and twenty-five feet, about two-thirds
 of the measure of the church of St. Peter's at
 Rome.^o In the other dimensions, it was still
 more inferior to that sublime production of mo-
 dern architecture. The spreading arms of a
 christian cross require a much greater breadth
 than the oblong temples of the pagans, and the
 boldest artists of antiquity would have been
 startled at the proposal of raising in the air a
 dome of the size and proportions of the pan-
 theon. The temple of Diana was, however,
 admired as one of the wonders of the world.

^m Hist. August. p. 178. Jornandes, c. 20.

ⁿ Strabo, l. xiv, p. 640. Vitruvius, l. i, c. 1, prefat. l. vii. Tacit. Aunal. iii, 61. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxvi, 14.

^o The length of St. Peter's is 840 Roman palms; each palm is very little short of nine English inches. See Greaves's Miscellanies, vol. i, p. 233; On the Roman foot.

CHAP. X. Successive empires, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman, had revered its sanctity, and enriched its splendour.^p But the rude savages of the Baltic were destitute of a taste for the elegant arts, and they despised the ideal terrors of a foreign superstition.^q

Conduct of the Goths at Athens. Another circumstance is related of these invasions, which might deserve our notice, were it not justly to be suspected as the fanciful conceit of a recent sophist. We are told, that, in the sack of Athens, the Goths had collected all the libraries, and were on the point of setting fire to this funeral pile of Grecian learning, had not one of their chiefs, of more refined policy than his brethren, dissuaded them from the design; by the profound observation, that as long as the Greeks were addicted to the study of books, they would never apply themselves to the exercise of arms.^r The sagacious counsellor (should the truth of the fact be admitted) reasoned like an ignorant barbarian. In the most polite and powerful nations, genius of every kind has displayed itself about the same period; and the age of science has generally been the age of military virtue and success.

* The policy, however, of the Romans induced them to abridge the extent of the sanctuary or asylum, which, by successive privileges, had spread itself two stadia round the temple. Strabo, I. xiv, p. 641. Tacit. Annal. iii, 60, &c.

^t They offered no sacrifices to the Grecian gods. See Epistol. Gregor. Thaumaturgus.

^x Zosimas, I. xii, p. 635. Snorri's anecdote was perfectly suited to the taste of Montaigne. He makes use of it in his agreeable *Essay on Pedantry*, L. i, c. 24.

iv. The new sovereigns of Persia, Artaxerxes ^{CHAP.}
 and his son Sapor, had triumphed (as we have
 already seen) over the house of Arsaces. Of
 the many princes of that ancient race, Chosroes,
 king of Armenia, had alone preserved both his
 life and his independence. He defended him-
 self by the natural strength of his country; by
 the perpetual resort of fugitives and malecon-
 tents; by the alliance of the Romans, and,
 above all, by his own courage. Invincible in
 arms, during a thirty years war, he was at
 length assassinated by the emissaries of Sapor,
 king of Persia. The patriotic satraps of Ar-
 menia, who asserted the freedom and dignity
 of the crown, implored the protection of Rome
 in favour of Tiridates the lawful heir. But the
 son of Chosroes was an infant, the allies were
 at a distance, and the Persian monarch ad-
 vanced towards the frontier at the head of an
 irresistible force. Young Tiridates, the future
 hope of his country, was saved by the fidelity
 of a servant, and Armenia continued above
 twenty-seven years a reluctant province of the
 great monarchy of Persia. Elated with this
 easy conquest, and presuming on the distresses
 or the degeneracy of the Romans, Sapor obliged
 the strong garrisons of Carrhae and Nisibis to
 surrender, and spread devastation and terror on
 either side of the Euphrates.

* Moses Choreensis, l. ii, c. 71, 73, 74. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 628.
 The authentic relation of the Armenian historian serves to rectify
 the confused account of the Greek. The latter talks of the children
 of Tiridates, who at that time was himself an infant.

CHAP.

X.

Valerian
marches
into the
East.

The loss of an important frontier, the ruin of a faithful and natural ally, and the rapid success of Sapor's ambition, affected Rome with a deep sense of the insult as well as of the danger. Valerian flattered himself, that the vigilance of his lieutenants would sufficiently provide for the safety of the Rhine and of the Danube; but he resolved, notwithstanding his advanced age, to march in person to the defence of the Euphrates. During his progress through Asia Minor, the naval enterprises of the Goths were suspended, and the afflicted province enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm. He passed the Euphrates, encountered the Persian monarch near the walls of Edessa, was vanquished, and taken prisoner by Sapor. The particulars of this great event are darkly and imperfectly represented; yet, by the glimmering light which is afforded us, we may discover a long series of imprudence, of error, and of deserved misfortune on the side of the Roman emperor. He reposed an implicit confidence in Macrianus, his praetorian prefect.¹ That worthless minister rendered his master formidable only to the oppressed subjects, and contemptible to the enemies of Rome.² By his weak or wicked counsels, the imperial army was betrayed into a situation, where valour and military skill were equally unavailing.³ The vigorous attempt of the Romans to cut their way through the Persian host, was repulsed with great

¹ Hist. August. p. 191. As Macrianus was an enemy to the christians, they charged him with being a magician.

² Zosimus, l. i. p. 33.

³ Hist. August. p. 174.

slaughter;³ and Sapor, who encompassed the camp with superior numbers, patiently waited till the increasing rage of famine and pestilence had ensured his victory. The licentious murmurs of the legions soon accused Valerian as the cause of their calamities; their seditious clamours demanded an instant capitulation. An immense sum of gold was offered to purchase the permission of a disgraceful retreat. But the Persian, conscious of his superiority, refused the money with disdain; and detaining the deputies, advanced in order of battle to the foot of the Roman rampart, and insisted on a personal conference with the emperor. Valerian was reduced to the necessity of intrusting his life and dignity to the faith of an enemy. The interview ended as it was natural to expect. The emperor was made a prisoner, and his astonished troops laid down their arms.⁴ In such a moment of triumph, the pride and policy of Sapor prompted him to fill the vacant throne with a successor entirely dependent on his pleasure. Cyriades, an obscure fugitive of Antioch, stained with every vice, was chosen to dishonour the Roman purple; and the will of the Persian victor could not fail of being ratified by the acclamations, however reluctant, of the captive army.⁵

³ Victor in Cæsar. Eutropius, ix, 7.

⁴ Zosimus, l. i, p. 33. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 630. Peter Patricius, in the Excerpta Legat. p. 29.

⁵ Hist. August. p. 185. The reign of Cyriades appears in that collection prior to the death of Valerian; but I have preferred a probable series of events to the doubtful chronology of a most inaccurate writer.

CHAP.

X.

Sapor
overruns
Syria, Ci-
licia, and
Cappado-
cia.

The imperial slave was eager to secure the favour of his master by an act of treason to his native country. He conducted Sapor over the Euphrates, and, by the way of Chalcis, to the metropolis of the East. So rapid were the motions of the Persian cavalry, that, if we may credit a very judicious historian,^b the city of Antioch was surprised when the idle multitude was fondly gazing on the amusements of the theatre. The splendid buildings of Antioch, private as well as public, were either pillaged or destroyed; and the numerous inhabitants were put to the sword, or led away into captivity.^c The tide of devastation was stopped for a moment by the resolution of the high priest of Emesa. Arrayed in his sacerdotal robes, he appeared at the head of a great body of fanatic peasants, armed only with slings, and defended his god and his property from the sacrilegious hands of the followers of Zoroaster.^d But the ruin of Tarsus, and of many other cities, furnishes a melancholy proof, that, except in this singular instance, the conquest of Syria and Cilicia scarcely interrupted the progress of the Persian arms. The advantages of the narrow passes of mount Taurus were abandoned, in which an invader, whose principal force consisted in his cavalry, would have been engaged in a very unequal combat:

^b The sack of Antioch, anticipated by some historians, is assigned, by the decisive testimony of Ammianus Marcellinus, to the reign of Gallienus, xxiii, 5.

^c Zosimus, I. i, p. 35.

^d John Malala, tom. i, p. 391. He corrupts this probable event by some fabulous circumstances.

and Sapor was permitted to form the siege of Cæsarea, the capital of Cappadocia; a city, though of the second rank, which was supposed to contain four hundred thousand inhabitants. Demosthenes commanded in the place, ~~not~~^{CHAP.} so much by the commission of the emperor, as in the voluntary defence of his country. For a long time he deferred its fate; and, when at last Cæsarea was betrayed by the perfidy of a physician, he cut his way through the Persians, who had been ordered to exert their utmost diligence to take him alive. This heroic chief escaped the power of a foe, who might either have honoured or punished his obstinate valour; but many thousands of his fellow-citizens were involved in a general massacre, and Sapor is accused of treating his prisoners with wanton and unrelenting cruelty.^c Much should undoubtedly be allowed for national animosity, much for humbled pride and impotent revenge; yet, upon the whole, it is certain that the same prince, who in Armenia had displayed the mild aspect of a legislator, shewed himself to the Romans under the stern features of a conqueror. He despaired of making any permanent establishment in the empire, and sought only to leave behind him a wasted desert, whilst he transported into Persia the people and the treasures of the provinces.^d

^c Zosimus, l. xii, p. 630. Deep valleys were filled up with the slain. Caravans of prisoners were driven to water like beasts, and many perished for want of food.

^d Zosimus, l. i, p. 25, asserts, that Sapor, had he not preferred spoil to conquest, might have remained master of Asia.

CHAP.

X.

Boldness
and success
of Odena-
thus
against Sa-
por.

At the time when the East trembled at the name of Sapor, he received a present not unworthy of the greatest kings; a long train of camels laden with the most rare and valuable merchandises. The rich offering was accompanied with an epistle, respectful but not servile, from Odenathus, one of the noblest and most opulent senators of Palmyra. "Who is this Odenathus," (said the haughty victor, and he commanded that the presents should be cast into the Euphrates) "that he thus insolently presumes to write to his lord? If he entertains a hope of mitigating his punishments, let him fall prostrate before the foot of our throne with his hands bound behind his back. Should he hesitate, swift destruction shall be poured on his head, on his whole race, and on his country." The desperate extremity to which the Palmyrenian was reduced called into action all the latent powers of his soul. He met Sapor, but he met him in arms. Infusing his own spirit into a little army collected from the villages of Syria,^h and the tents of the desert,ⁱ he hovered round the Persian host, harassed their retreat, carried off part of the treasure, and what was dearer than any treasure, several of the

^g Peter Patricius in Excerpt. Leg. p. 29.

^h Syrorum agrestium manū. Sextus Rufus, c. 23. Rufus Victor, the Augustan History (p. 192), and several inscriptions agree in making Odenathus a citizen of Palmyra.

ⁱ He possessed so powerful an interest among the wandering tribes, that Procopius (Bell. Persic. I. ii, c. 6), and John Malala (tom. I. p. 391), style him prince of the Saracens.

OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

women of the great king; who was at last obliged to repass the Euphrates with some marks of haste and confusion.² By this exploit, Odenathus laid the foundations of his future fame and fortune. The majesty of Rome, oppressed by a Persian, was protected by a Syrian or Arab of Palmyra.

The voice of history, which is often little more than the organ of hatred or flattery, approaches Sapor with a proud abuse of the rights of conquest. We are told that Valerian, in chains ~~but invested with the imperial purple,~~ was exposed to the multitude, a constant spectacle of fallen greatness; and that whenever the Persian monarch mounted on horseback, he placed his foot on the neck of a Roman emperor. Notwithstanding all the remonstrances of his allies, who repeatedly advised him to remember the vicissitude of fortune, to dread the returning power of Rome, and to make his illustrious captive the pledge of peace, not the object of insult, Sapor still remained inflexible. When Valerian sunk under the weight of shame and grief, his skin, stuffed with straw, and formed into the likeness of a human figure, was preserved for ages in the most celebrated temple of Persia; a more real monument of triumph, than the fancied trophies of brass and marble so often erected by Roman vanity.³ The tale is moral and pa-

² Peter Patricius, p. 25.

³ The pagan writers lament, the christians insult, the misfortunes of Valerian. Their various testimonies are accurately collected by Tillemont,

CHAP. X. ^mthetic, but the truth of it may very fairly be called in question. The letters still extant from the princes of the East to Sapor, are manifest forgeries; nor is it natural to suppose that a jealous monarch should, even in the person of a rival, thus publicly degrade the majesty of kings. Whatever treatment the unfortunate Valerian might experience in Persia, it is at least certain, that the only emperor of Rome who had ever fallen into the hands of the enemy, languished away his life in hopeless captivity.

Character
and admi-
nistration
of Gallie-
nus.

The emperor Gallienus, who had long supported with impatience the censorial severity of his father and colleague, received the intelligence of his misfortunes with secret pleasure and avowed indifference. “I knew that my father was a mortal,” said he; “and since he has acted as becomes a brave man, I am satisfied.” Whilst Rome lamented the fate of her sovereign, the savage coldness of his son was extolled by the servile courtiers, as the perfect firmness of a hero and a stoic.ⁿ It is difficult to paint the light, the various, the inconstant character of Gallienus, which he displayed without constraint, as soon as he became sole possessor of the empire. In every art that he attempted, his lively genius

Tillemont, tom. iii, p. 739, &c. So little has been preserved of eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation. See *Bibliotheque Orientale*.

^m One of these epistles is from Artavaedes, king of Armenia. Since Armenia was then a province in Persia, the king, the kingdom, and the epistle, must be fictitious.

ⁿ See his life in the *Augustan History*.

enabled him to succeed; and as his genius was ~~equal~~
destitute of judgment, he attempted every art,
except the important ones of war and govern-
ment. He was a master of several curious but
useless sciences, a ready orator, and elegant
poet, a skilful gardener, an excellent cook,
and most contemptible prince. When the great
emergencies of the state required his presence
and attention, he was engaged in conversation
with the philosopher Plotinus,⁹ wasting his time
in trifling or licentious pleasures, preparing his
initiation to the Grecian mysteries, or soliciting
a place in the Areopagus of Athens. His pro-
fuse magnificence insulted the general poverty;
the solemn ridicule of his triumphs impressed a
deeper sense of the public disgrace.¹⁰ The

⁹ There is still extant a very pretty epithalamium, composed by Gallienus for the nuptials of his nephews.

Ite ait, O Juvenes, pariter sudate medullis

Omnia bus, inter vos: non murmura vestra columbae,

Brachia non Hedarge, non vincant oscula Conchae.

¹⁰ He was on the point of giving Plotinus a ruined city of Cam-
pania, to try the experiment of realising Plato's republic. See the
life of Plotinus, by Porphyry, in Fabricius's Biblioth. Graec., L. iv.

A medal which bears the head of Gallienus has perplexed the
antiquarians by its legend and reverse; the former *Gallienæ Augustæ*,
the latter *Ubique Pax*. M. Spanheim supposes that the coin was struck
by some of the enemies of Gallienus, and was designed as a severe
satire on that effeminate prince. But as the use of irony may seem
unworthy of the gravity of the Roman mint, M. de Vallemont has
deduced from a passage of Trebellius Pollio (Hist. August. p. 198)
an ingenious and natural solution. Gallienus was first cousin to the
emperor. By delivering Africa from the usurper Celsus, he de-
served the title of Augusta. On a medal in the French king's col-
lection, we read a similar inscription of *Faustina Augusta* round the
head of Marcus Aurelius. With regard to the *Ubique Pax*, it is
easily explained by the vanity of Gallienus, who seized, perhaps,
the

CHAP. repeated intelligence of invasions, defeats, and
~~X.~~ rebellions, he received with a careless smile ;
and singling out, with affected contempt, some
particular production of the lost province, he
carelessly asked, whether Rome must be ruined,
unless it was supplied with linen from Egypt,
and Arras cloth from Gaul ? There were, how-
ever, a few short moments in the life of Gallienus,
when, exasperated by some recent injury, he
suddenly appeared the intrepid soldier and the
cruel tyrant ; till, satiated with blood, or fatigued
by resistance, he insensibly sunk into the natural
mildness and indolence of his character.^r

The thirty
tyrants. At a time when the reins of government were
held with so loose a hand, it is not surprising,
that a crowd of usurpers should start up in every
province of the empire against the son of Vale-
rian. It was probably some ingenious fancy, of
comparing the thirty tyrants of Rome with the
thirty tyrants of Athens, that induced the writers
of the Augustan history to select that cele-
brated number, which has been gradually receiv-
ed into a popular appellation.^s But in every
light the parallel is idle and defective. What
resemblance can we discover between a council

the occasion of some momentary calm. See *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, Janvier 1700, p. 21-34.

^r This singular character has, I believe, been fairly transmitted to us. The reign of his immediate successor was short and busy ; and the historians who wrote before the elevation of the family of Constantine could not have the most remote interest to misrepresent the character of Gallienus.

^s Pollio expresses the most minute anxiety to complete the num-
ber.

of thirty persons, the united oppressors of a single city, and an uncertain list of independent rivals, who rose and fell in irregular succession through the extent of a vast empire? Nor can the number of thirty be completed, unless we include in the account the women and children who were honoured with the imperial title. The reign of Gallienus, distracted as it was, produced only nineteen pretenders to the throne; **Cyriades**, ^{Their real number was no more than nineteen.} Macrianus, Balista, Odenathus, and Zenobia, in the East; in Gaul, and the western provinces, Posthumus, Lollianus, Victorinus, and his mother Victoria, Marius, and Tetricus. In Illyricum and the confines of the Danube, Ingenuus, Regillianus, and Aureolus; in Pontus,^t Saturninus; in Isauria, Trebellianus; Piso in Thessaly; Valens in Achaia; Æmilianus in Egypt; and Celsus in Africa. To illustrate the obscure monuments of the life and death of each individual, would prove a laborious task, alike barren of instruction and of amusement. We may content ourselves with investigating some general characters, that most strongly mark the condition of the times, and the manners of the men, their pretensions, their motives, their fate, and the destructive consequences of their usurpation.^a

It is sufficiently known, that the odious appellation of *tyrant* was often employed by the ancients to express the illegal seizure of supreme ^{Character and merit of the tyrants.}

^t The place of his reign is somewhat doubtful; but there was a tyrant in Pontus, and we are acquainted with the seat of all the others.

^a Tillenmont, tom. iii, p. 1163, reckons them somewhat differently.

CHAP. power, without any reference to the abuse of it.

X Several of the pretenders, who raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor Gallienus, were shining models of virtue, and almost all possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. Their merit had recommended them to the favour of Valerian, and gradually promoted them to the most important commands of the empire. The generals, who assumed the title of Augustus, were either respected by their troops for their able conduct and severe discipline, or admired for valour and success in war, or beloved for frankness and generosity. The field of victory was often the scene of their election; and even the armourer Maurius, the most contemptible of all the candidates for the purple, was distinguished however by intrepid courage, matchless strength, and blunt honesty.* His mean and recent trade cast indeed an air of ridicule on his ~~elevation~~, but his birth could not be more obscure than was that of the greater part of his rivals, who were born of peasants, and enlisted in the army as private soldiers. In times of confusion, every active genius finds the place assigned him by nature: in a general state of war, military merit is the road to glory and to greatness. Of the nineteen tyrants, Tetricus only was a senator; Piso alone was a noble. The blood of Numa, through twenty-eight successive generations, ran in the veins of Calphur-

* See the speech of Marius, in the Augustan History, p. 197. The accidental identity of names was the only circumstance that could tempt Pollie to imitate Sallust.

nius Piso,³ who, by female alliances, claimed ~~the~~^{the} a right of exhibiting in his house the images of Crassus and of the great Pompey.⁴ His ancestors had been repeatedly dignified with all the honours which the commonwealth could bestow; and of all the ancient families of Rome, the Calphurnian alone had survived the tyranny of the Caesars. The personal qualities of Piso added new lustre to his race. The usurper Valens, by whose order he was killed, confessed, with deep remorse, that even an enemy ought to have respected the sanctity of Piso; and although he died in arms against Gallienus, the senate, with the emperor's generous permission, decreed the triumphal ornaments to the memory of so virtuous a rebel.⁵

The lieutenants of Valerian were grateful to the causes of their rebellion. The father whom they esteemed. They disdained to serve the luxurious indolence of his unworthy son. The throne of the Roman world was unsupported by any principle of loyalty; and treason against such a prince might easily be considered as patriotism to the state. Yet if we examine with candour the conduct of these

³ *Ves, O Pomпilius sanguis!* is Horace's address to the Pisos. See Art. Poet. v. 292, with Dacier's and Sanadon's notes.

⁴ Tacit. Annal. xv. 48. Hist. i. 15. In the former of these passages we may venture to change *paterna* into *materna*. In every generation from Augustus to Alexander Severus, one or more Pisos appear as consuls. A Piso was deemed worthy of the throne by Augustus (Tacit. Annal. i. 13). A second headed a formidable conspiracy against Nero; and a third was adopted, and declared Cæsar by Galba.

⁵ Hist. August. p. 195. The senate, in a moment of enthusiasm, seems to have presumed on the approbation of Gallienus.

CHAP. usurpers, it will appear, that they were much oftener driven into rebellion by their fears, than urged to it by their ambition. They dreaded the cruel suspicions of Gallienus; they equally dreaded the capricious violence of their troops. If the dangerous favour of the army had imprudently declared them deserving of the purple, they were marked for sure destruction; and even prudence would counsel them, to secure a short enjoyment of empire, and rather to try the fortune of war, than to expect the hand of an executioner. When the clamour of the soldiers invested the reluctant victims with the ensigns of sovereign authority, they sometimes mourned in secret their approaching fate. " You have lost," said Saturninus, on the day of his elevation, " you have lost a useful commander, and you have made a very wretched emperor."^b

Their violent deaths. The apprehensions of Saturninus were justified by the repeated experience of revolutions. Of the nineteen tyrants who started up under the reign of Gallienus, there was not one who enjoyed a life of peace, or a natural death. As soon as they were invested with the bloody purple, they inspired their adherents with the same fears and ambition which had occasioned their own revolt. Encompassed with domestic conspiracy, military sedition, and civil war, they trembled on the edge of precipices, in which, after a longer or shorter term of anxiety, they were inevitably lost. These precarious monarchs

received, however, such honours, as the flattery ~~of their respective families and provinces could bestow: but these claim, founded on rebellion,~~
~~could never obtain the sanction of law or history.~~
 Italy, Rome, and the senate, constantly addressed to the name of Gallienus, and he alone was considered as the sovereign of the empire. That prince condescended, indeed, to acknowledge the victorious arms of Odenathus, who deserved the honourable distinction, by the respectful conduct which he always maintained towards the son of Valerian. With the general applause of the Romans, and the consent of Gallienus, the senate conferred the title of Augustus on the brave Palmyrenian; and seemed to intrust him with the government of the East, which he already possessed, in so independent a manner, that, like a private succession, he bequeathed it to his illustrious widow Zenobia.^c

The rapid and perpetual transitions from the cottage to the throne, and from the throne to the grave, might have annoyed a different philosopher; were it possible for a philosopher to remain indifferent amidst the general calamities of human kind. The election of these precarious emperors, their power, and their death, were equally destructive to their subjects and adherents. The price of their fatal elevation was instantly discharged to the troops, by an immense donative, drawn from the bowels of the exhausted

Fatal consequences
of these usurpa-
tions.

^c The association of the brave Palmyrenian was the most popular act of the whole reign of Gallienus. Hist. August. p. 160.

CHAP. people. However virtuous was their character, however pure their intentions, they found themselves reduced to the hard necessity of supporting their usurpation by frequent acts of rapine and cruelty. When they fell, they involved armies and provinces in their fall. There is still extant a most savage mandate from Gallienus to one of his ministers, after the suppression of Ingenuus, who had assumed the purple in Illyricum. “ It is not enough,” says that soft but inhuman prince, “ that you exterminate such as have appeared in arms: the chance of battle might have served me as effectually. The male sex of every age must be extirpated; provided that, in the execution of the children and old men, you can contrive means to save our reputation. Let every one die who has dropped an expression, who has entertained a thought against me, against me the son of Valerian, the father and brother of so many princes.” Remember that Ingenuus was made emperor; “ tear, kill, hew in pieces. I write to you with my own hand, and would inspire you with my own feelings.” Whilst the public forces of the state were dissipated in private quarrels,

^a Gallienus had given the titles of Caesar and Augustus to his son Saloninus, slain at Cologne by the usurper Posthumus. A second son of Gallienus succeeded to the name and rank of his elder brother. Valerian, the brother of Gallienus, was also associated to the empire: several other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces, of the emperor, formed a very numerous royal family. See Tillemont, tom. iii, and M. de Brequigny in the Mémoires de l'Academie, tom. xxxii, p. 262.

* Hist. Aug. &c. pt. 55.

the defenceless provinces lay exposed to every ~~city~~^{barbarian} invader. The ~~brave~~^{bold} usurpers were compelled, by the perplexity of their situation, to conclude ignominious treaties with the common enemy, to purchase with oppressive tributes the neutrality or services of the barbarians, and to introduce hostile and independent nations into the heart of the Roman monarchy.¹

Such were the barbarians, and such the tyrants, who, under the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, dismembered the provinces, and reduced the empire to the lowest pitch of disgrace and ruin, from whence it seemed impossible that it should ever emerge. As far as the barrenness of materials would permit, we have attempted to trace, with order and perspicuity, the general events of that calamitous period. There still remain some particular facts; i. The disorders of Sicily; ii. The tumults of Alexandria; and, iii. The rebellion of the Isaurians, which may serve to reflect a strong light on the horrid picture.

i. Whenever numerous troops ~~were scattered~~, Disorders of Sicily. multiplied by success and impunity, publicly defy, instead of eluding, the justice of their country, we may safely infer, that the excessive weakness of the government is felt and abused by the lowest ranks of the community. The situation of Sicily preserved it from the barbarians; nor could the disarmed province have supported an usurper. The sufferings of that

¹ Regilliam had some bands of Roxolani in his service. Post-humus a body of Franks. It was perhaps in the character of auxiliaries that the latter introduced themselves into Spain.

CHAP. once flourishing and still fertile island, were inflicted by baser hands. A licentious crowd of slaves and peasants reigned for a while over the plundered country, and renewed the memory of the servile wars of more ancient times.^s Devastations of which the husbandman was either the victim or the accomplice, must have ruined the agriculture of Sicily; and as the principal estates were the property of the opulent senators of Rome, who often enclosed within a farm, the territory of an old republic, it is not improbable, that this private injury might affect the capital more deeply than all the conquests of the Goths or the Persians.

Tumults
of Alex-
andria.

ii. The foundation of Alexandria was a noble design, at once conceived and executed by the son of Philip. The beautiful and regular form of that great city, second only to Rome itself, comprehended a circumference of fifteen miles;^t it was peopled by three hundred thousand free inhabitants, besides at least an equal number of slaves.^u The lucrative trade of Arabia and India flowed through the port of Alexandria to the capital and provinces of the empire. Idleness was unknown. Some were employed in blowing of glass, others in weaving of linen, others again manufacturing the papyrus. Either sex, and every age, was engaged in the pursuits of industry; nor did even the blind or the lame want

^s The Augustan History, p. 177, calls it *servile bellum*. See Diodor. Sicul. I. xxxiv.

^t Plin. Hist. Natur. v. 10.

^u Diodor. Sicul. I. xvii, p. 590. Edit. Wesseling.

occupations suited to their condition.* But the ~~char~~^X people of Alexandria, a various mixture of nations, united the vanity and inconstancy of the Greeks, with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. The most trifling occasion, a transient scarcity of flesh or lentils, the neglect of an accustomed salutation, a mistake of precedence in the public baths, or even a religious dispute,ⁿ were at any time sufficient to kindle a sedition among that vast multitude, whose resentments were furious and implacable.^m After the captivity of Valerian and the insolence of his son had relaxed the authority of the laws, the Alexandrians abandoned themselves to the ungoverned rage of their passions, and their unhappy country was the theatre of a civil war, which continued (with a few short and suspicious truces) above twelve years.ⁿ All intercourse was cut off between the several quarters of the afflicted city, every street was polluted with blood, every building of strength converted into a citadel; nor did the tumults subside, till a considerable part of Alexandria was irretrievably ruined. The spacious and magnificent district of Bruchion, with its palaces and museum, the residence of the

* See a very curious letter of Hadrian in the Augustan History, p. 245.

Such as the sacrilegious murder of a divine cat. See Diodor. Sicul. l. f.

ⁿ Hist. August. p. 195. This long and terrible sedition was first occasioned by a dispute between a soldier and a townsmen about a pair of shoes.

^m Dionysius apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vol. vii, p. 21. Ammian. xxii, 16.

CHAP. kings and philosophers of Egypt, is described above
 X. a century afterwards, as already reduced to its present state of dreary solitude.*

**Rebellion
of the
Isaurians.**

III. The obscure rebellion of Trebellianus, who assumed the purple in Isauria, a petty province of Asia Minor, was attended with strange and memorable consequences. The pageant of royalty was soon destroyed by an officer of Gallienus; but his followers, despairing of mercy, resolved to shake off their allegiance, not only to the emperor, but to the empire, and suddenly returned to the savage manners, from which they had never perfectly been reclaimed. Their craggy rocks, a branch of the wide extended Taurus, protected their inaccessible retreat. The tillage of some fertile vallies^p supplied them with necessaries, and a habit of rapine with the luxuries of life. In the heart of the Roman monarchy, the Isaurians long continued a nation of wild barbarians. Succeeding princes, unable to reduce them to obedience either by arms or policy, were compelled to acknowledge their weakness, by surrounding the hostile and independent spot, with a strong chain of fortifications, which often proved insufficient to restrain the incursions of these domestic foes. The Isaurians, gradually extending their territory to the sea coast, subdued the western and mountainous part of Cilicia, formerly the nest of those daring

* Scaliger, Animadver. ad Euseb. Chron. p. 258. Three dissertations of M. Bonamay, in the Mem. de l'Academie, tom. ix.

^p Strabo, l. xii, p. 569.

Hist. August. p. 197.

pirates, against whom the republic had once been ~~chancier~~^X obliged to exert its utmost force, under the conduct of the great Pompey.^{*}

Our habits of thinking so fondly connect the order of the universe with the fate of man, that this gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, uncommon meteors, preternatural darkness, and a crowd of prodigies, fictitious or exaggerated.[†] But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of rapine and oppression, which extirpated the produce of the present, and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes must, however, have contributed to the furious plague, which, from the year two hundred and fifty to the year two hundred and sixty-five, raged without interruption in every province, every city, and almost every family, of the Roman empire. During some time five thousand persons died daily in Rome; and many towns, that had escaped the hands of the barbarians, were entirely depopulated.[‡]

We have the knowledge of a very curious circumstance, of some use perhaps in the melan-

Diminution of the
human species.

* See Cellarius, Geogr. Antiq. tom. ii, p. 137, upon the limits of Isauria.

† Hist. August. p. 177.

‡ Hist. August. p. 177. Zosimus, l. i, p. 24. Zonaras, l. xii, p. 623. Euseb. Chronicón. Victor in Epitom. Victor in Cæsar. Eutropius, ix, 5. Orosius, vii, 21.

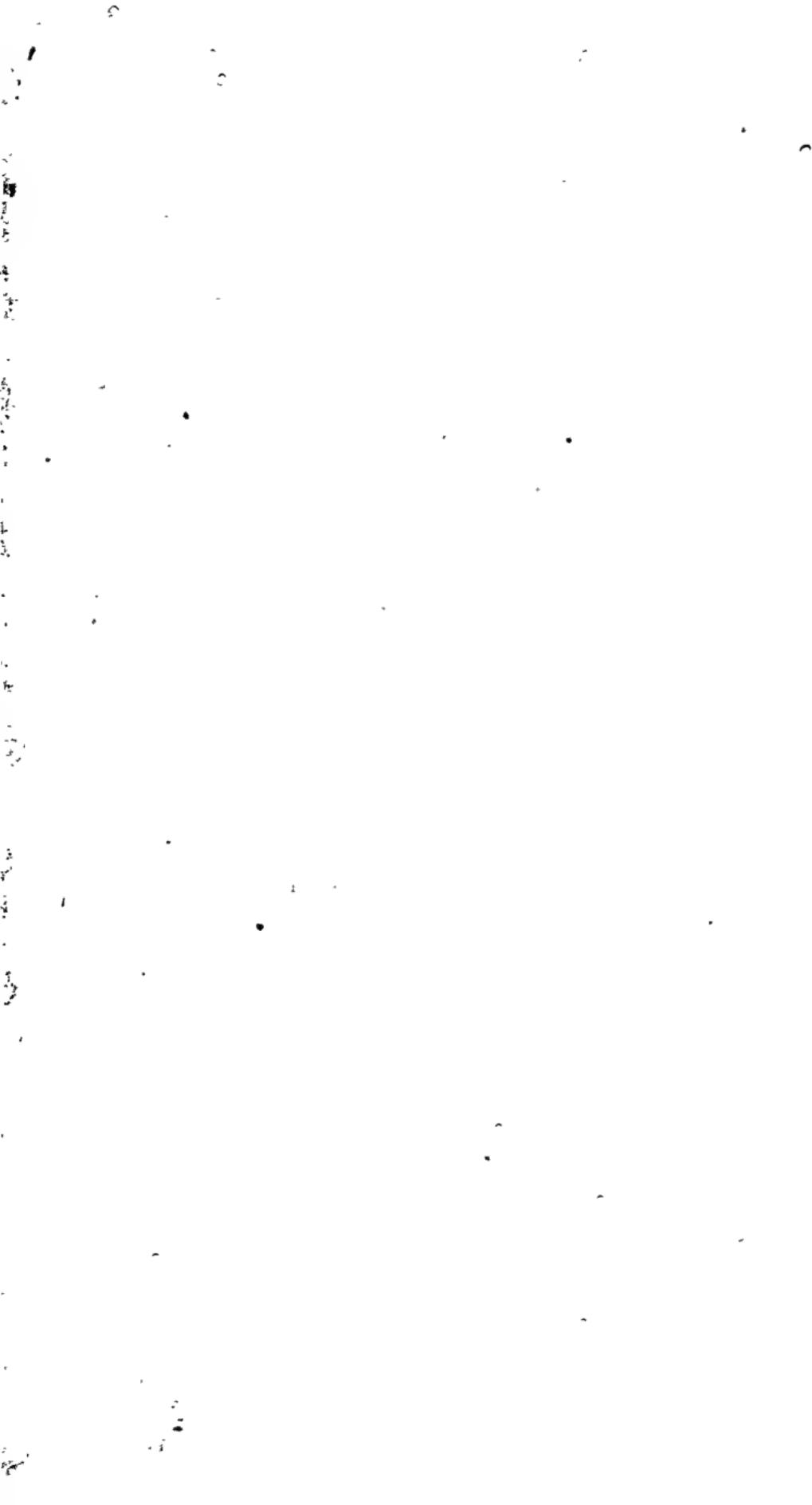
CHAP. choly calculation of human calamities. An exact register was kept at Alexandria of all the citizens entitled to receive the distribution of corn. It was found, that the ancient number of those comprised between the ages of forty and seventy, had been equal to the whole sum of claimants, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, who remained alive after the reign of Gallienus.^u Applying this authentic fact to the most correct tables of mortality, it evidently proves, that above half the people of Alexandria had perished ; and could we venture to extend the analogy to the other provinces, we might suspect, that war, pestilence, and famine, had consumed, in a few years, the moiety of the human species.^v

^u Euseb. Hist. Eccles. vii, 21. The fact is taken from the Letters of Dionysius, who, in the time of those troubles, was bishop of Alexandria.

^v In a great number of parishes 11,000 persons were found between fourteen and eighty : 5365 between and seventy. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, tom. xii, p. 590.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





105.C
CATALOGUED.

